Cancelled from
Gladstone's Library
23 SEP 2024

HOW READEST THOU?

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/howreadestthou0000step

HOW READEST THOU?

A Simple Introduction to the New Testament

ST. DEINIOL'S HAWARDEN LIBRARY

BY

STEPHEN NEILL

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

[illegible]

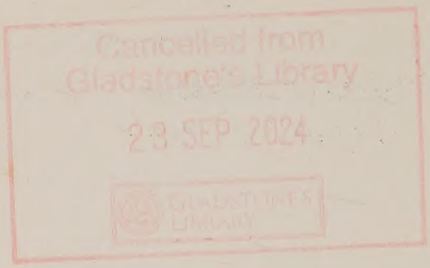
LONDON

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

32 RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C. I

1925

30
114



First published November 1925

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE EDINBURGH PRESS, 9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET, EDINBURGH

PREFACE

This book requires very little in the way of Preface. In the course of work of various kinds amongst boys, I never found exactly the book about the New Testament which I wished to put into their hands. The work of preparing for the Theological Tripos at Cambridge suggested the writing of this book. I have tried to keep in mind the two considerations of brevity and simplicity, and I fear that the book may give a painful impression of the restraint under which it has been written. I have tried to concentrate on the New Testament itself, even at the expense of giving practically no references to other books. In these days, people would far rather read a book about the New Testament than the New Testament itself; anyone who conscientiously reads this book, as it was written, with a constantly open Bible, will have worked at least once through the whole of the New Testament; at the end of this study, his mind may well be filled with many questions to which no answer is ever suggested in this book, and for these he must go on to larger works. But the first essential is to master the text of the New Testament and let it say its own say. With such deep matters as the possibility of revelation, the relation of the natural to the supernatural, the credibility of the Gospel narratives I have not

attempted to deal here; perhaps if time and opportunity are given another book may follow this. It would be foolish and tedious to attempt to acknowledge all the debts which have been incurred in the writing of this book; the two which I feel to be the greatest are recorded in the dedication.

As I write, I can look out over the plain of Tinnevelly as far as the sea; in the foreground of the picture is the tower of a Hindu temple. I would not press any of my views in matters of scholarship and criticism; but I have made no attempt to conceal my own acceptance of the historic faith of the Church, and of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. *Domine Deus, quaecumque dixi in hoc libro de tuo, agnoscant et tui; si aliquid de meo, et tu ignosce et tui.*

S. N.

DILECTISSIMIS

A. NAIRNE

E. A. WILLIS

HUIC NOVI TESTAMENTI

ILLI CORDIUM PUERORUM

INTERPRETI OPTIMO

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Introductory	1
II.	The World to which Jesus came	20
III.	How our Gospels were Written	28
IV.	The Fourfold Gospel . .	43
V.	The Teaching of Jesus . .	96
VI.	The Acts of the Apostles .	104
VII.	The Writings of Paul . .	117
VIII.	The Epistle to the Hebrews .	187
IX.	The Catholic Epistles . .	196
X.	The Revelation . . .	213

"All I hold is that the more I learn the more I am convinced that fresh doubts come from my own ignorance, and that at present I find the presuppositions in favour of the absolute truth of the Holy Scriptures overwhelming."

"There is indeed nothing small in Scripture. Every syllable, as Origen says, has as I believe its force and the words are living words for us." "There I feel absolutely sure, having tried every word."

BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT.

HOW READEST THOU?

I

INTRODUCTORY

1. *The Importance of the New Testament*

THE Bible opens with the tremendous words, "In the beginning God"; perhaps this book can begin nowhere better than in the same place. The principle of God's dealings with men is that of Incarnation, the revelation of the divine through the human; we approach the glory of the ascended and reigning Christ through the perfection of the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth. The Bible is included in this principle; it is a divine revelation, but a revelation given in human form through the minds and words and writings of men; it has an outward form and an inward significance, and the inward can only be reached by the study of the outward. This book will be mainly concerned with the externals of the New Testament, its form, its writings, its contents; but it is written for the sake of the divine revelation. The externals are not ends in themselves; there are no ends in this life except God; the Bible, the Church, the individual Christian life are not ends, they are ways to God. To many, the New Testament is a way which has ceased

to exist; to others, it is a way which has become deeply overgrown with grass; but that is not the fault of the way. This book is written in the hope that it may help some to find the good going afforded by one of the main highways of the Kingdom of God.

The New Testament is the most important as well as being the most beautiful book in the world. It is a typically Eastern book; it emerged, many generations ago, from the most severely national of all the races of the earth, it is in the main the work of obscure and not very well-educated men in a remote province of the Roman Empire; to-day, it is the most international book in the world, having its greatest influence in the West; in all ages it has secured the enthusiastic assent and devotion of countless men and women, and not least of the most learned and influential among them; by colouring the dreams of idealists, and lending inspiration to the achievements of social reformers, it has contributed all that is best in modern civilisation. The secret of this enormous influence is simply that the New Testament is unique as a revelation of God; it has given to men a wholly new conception of the character of God and of His dealings with men, it has given coherence and assurance to men's desires for immortality and fellowship with God, and it has supplied the dynamic force which transforms character and renews all life: for the New Testament is before all else the story of the life and work of Jesus Christ, in whom God is perfectly revealed to those who seek Him.

For proof of this, we must turn to the New Testament itself: but before we do so, a few words must

necessarily be said by way of introduction. The New Testament may be studied in four ways.

I. First, *critically :* that is to say, with the purpose of finding out when each book was written, who the author of it was and why he wrote, to what kind of people it was written, what exactly was written and what it meant to those who first read it. This study is especially the province of the scholar and any advanced work in this field needs long and special training. But scholars are the servants of the Church, and the more we can learn from them of the results and processes of their work,[1] the better equipped we shall be on one side to appreciate the New Testament and penetrate the depths of its meaning.

II. The New Testament may be studied *historically.* It is impossible to go far without becoming aware of the existence of the Christian Church. Every time we write a letter or read a newspaper we bear silent witness to Christ. We can hardly open a history book without encountering some one of the Church's activities ; in parts of the Middle Ages, history and ecclesiastical history are almost interchangeable terms, and even in Victorian England religion and politics were often affected by one another. We cannot go far without seeing some Christian place of worship. To understand this

[1] To accept results without some idea of the processes by which they have been reached is a thoroughly dishonest act, and its consequences are disastrous. If it is impossible to test the process, the result must be accepted only with great caution as a hypothesis.

great and complicated fabric of the Church, we must go back to its small and simple beginnings. The business of the historian is to appraise the New Testament as historical evidence, to determine how much we really know of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, and of the doings and sufferings of His earliest followers.

III. Thirdly, the New Testament may be studied *theologically*. The Creeds of the Church are like a complex chemical compound, which, to be fully understood, must be reduced to its simplest elements. Now much the most important component in the Creeds is the thought about Jesus of His earliest followers ; and this can be recovered, in so far as it can be recovered at all, from the pages of the New Testament. The theologian seeks to determine what claims were made by Jesus for Himself, what was believed about Him by His disciples in the first and second generations, and whether we can believe the same things in the same way to-day.

IV. Finally, the New Testament may be studied *devotionally :* that is, by each individual with a view to finding out what the message of the book is for him. This is much the most important way ; very few people have either the time or the equipment to attempt any one of the other approaches ; whereas, the New Testament claims to have, and proves itself to have, a message of vital importance for every individual, a message which affects the whole of this life and the life to come.

This book will have something to say on all these

subjects ; but it is written for the sake of the last, in the hope that it may help some to hear, above the conflict and confusion of human voices, the commanding and compelling voice of God in revelation, promise and invitation. Those who pay the price which is required in patient and painstaking study will find themselves richly rewarded, and not least that they will be privileged to enter the fellowship of the lovers of the Book ; those who really know and care for the New Testament are knit together by a bond the strength of which has to be tested to be understood.

2. *The Inspiration of the New Testament*

It is commonly said that the New Testament is inspired ; but it nowhere defines its own inspiration, and the Church has never clearly and finally defined it. It is therefore necessary to inquire rather closely into the meaning of these words. Probably the best description ever given of inspiration is to be found in 2 Peter i. 21, where we read of the Old Testament books that " being borne along by the Holy Ghost, men spake from God." That is to say that certain men, being specially fitted to receive the message of God, were enabled through the work of the Holy Spirit, to preserve their message for future times by writing it down in a true and adequate form. Not that the writers ceased to be themselves ; Paul remained Paul, and John John, each with his special style and vision ; but to the revelation of God which was granted to their spiritual understanding and insight was added the power so to convey in

their writings the truth which they had received that those writings can themselves be spoken of as a revelation, as the word of God.

The inspiration of the New Testament is not so much a doctrine to be believed as a fact to be experienced. Four lines of experience converge to make the matter clear, two drawn from the book itself, and two from the relationship of men to it. There is first the unity of the books of which it is made up ; this is less striking than in the case of the Old Testament ; but it is none the less remarkable that twenty-seven books written at various times by a number of different authors should so perfectly coalesce into a unified whole, of which every part throws light on all the rest. Secondly, there is the inexhaustibility of the book. Very few books can submit to searching analysis without revealing defects of construction and style, and very few indeed can be read constantly without weariness. In the case of the New Testament, the minutest analysis is merely the key to new and unsuspected beauties ; ripening experience does not enable a man to dispense with it, but only the better to draw upon its wisdom ; those who have studied it longest and most exactly bear witness that their desire for it grows greater and not less. To turn to the second aspect of experience, we notice first the adequacy of the New Testament ; although it was written long ago, and in a set of special circumstances to which it exactly corresponded, it has in all ages proved itself marvellously adaptable ; in a wonderful way, it answers to all the complexities and manifold problems of our modern civilisation ; in spite of all doubts as to the

applications of its details, men have at all times found in its principles a sufficient guide in all the perplexing ways of life. Finally, there is the effect of the book on the individual; missionaries from every field can tell of the way in which a New Testament, or even a single book of it, has been used without any help from the spoken word to bring illumination of conscience and change of life to a non-Christian reader. It is impossible that any honest reader should not be profoundly impressed by a book which supplies at the same time a searching criticism of action and motive, a supreme moral example, and the power to fulfil its own requirements.

As to the manner and extent to which divine inspiration was given to the writers, we do well not to inquire more closely, because no answer can be given except that we do not know. But the question may be raised whether, if the New Testament has in it so much of the divine, it may not be wrong to treat it, in the matter of study and criticism, as we should treat any other ancient book. The answer is that, whatever the share of the New Testament in the divine, it has also a goodly share of the human; it has come down to us exactly as any Greek classic has come down, it shares the characteristic excellences and weaknesses of the Greek language as a means for the expression of thought. The only mistake is made in allowing literary and historical criticism to interfere in the region of religious truth, and expecting it to give answers to questions with which it has no concern; criticism can never prove whether or no a miracle is possible, nor can it demonstrate that Jesus was or

was not the Son of God. But in everything connected with the language of the New Testament, its meaning and the historical accuracy of the events which it records, criticism and scholarship are invaluable allies. If the New Testament is true, its truth will only stand out more clearly for all that criticism can do in the way of sifting and testing. To attempt to protect the New Testament by sheltering it from criticism is like trying to protect an arc lamp with muslin against the wind.

3. *How the New Testament came to us*

The Church is older than the New Testament, and it is through the Church that the New Testament came to us. We may suppose, besides the inspiration of the New Testament, a special work of the Holy Spirit, securing that none of the essential books should be lost, and that the Church should be rightly guided in various decisions as to which books should, and which should not, be accepted as Holy Scripture. The earliest of the books was written probably about A.D. 50, when the Church had already been in existence more than twenty years ; the latest not till the very end of the first century. All the books had, of course, to be copied by hand, and they were at first circulated singly. By degrees they began to be collected into groups and finally into the whole with which we are familiar, various Churches lending the weight of their authority to the books which they were in the habit of using. As to the earlier stages of this process of collection, we have no knowledge, for the later, we have good

evidence; it appears that Paul's Epistles had been gathered up in their present form by about A.D. 150, and our Gospels a little earlier; at any rate, Irenæus, writing towards the end of the second century, thinks it obvious to compare the four Gospels with the four winds—there must be just four of each, no more and no less. By the beginning of the third century, the New Testament in most Churches was not very different from what it is to-day. But a few stray books, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas and so on, which were afterwards rightly excluded, found their way into the Bible of various Churches; and others which we now include, such as Hebrews and 2 Peter, had a hard fight of it before their position was finally established. The great thinker and teacher Athanasius, who died in A.D. 373, was the first to give a list of the books exactly as they are printed in our New Testaments; within a hundred years of his time, the "Canon of the New Testament," as it is called, was fixed in the form in which it has remained to the present time.

In the copying of manuscripts, errors very easily creep in (a fact which can be verified by anyone who has ever been set lines to write at school); and the New Testament was no exception to the general rule, though it was probably copied with more care than was bestowed on an ordinary writer. For instance, the scribe might easily leave out a line, or copy into the text what was really a note in the margin; or misread what was in the copy in front of him and write down nonsense; or write down what was passing through his own mind instead of what he was supposed to be copying; or alter the

text to make it more like some other passage which he happened to remember. (This last error is constantly found in manuscripts of the Gospels; the scribe copying Matthew would remember Mark's account of the same incident and put in a few words to make the two accounts tally; a very extreme case is the Lord's Prayer, as can be seen by comparing the Authorised Version with the Revised in Matt. vi. 9-13, and Luke ii. 2-4.) Or, again, the scribe might disapprove of what he found written and alter deliberately; for instance, in Rev. xxi. 24, the text guaranteed by the oldest manuscripts is "the nations shall walk in the light of it"; but some scribe finding this too generous, has changed it to "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it." Of course, when a scribe had made a mistake, all the scribes who copied from him made the same mistake and added others of their own; so that almost all the copies of the New Testament made after A.D. 500 are of a level of dulness and badness, which is the result of a long period of degeneration.

The invention of printing made a revolution in the history of the New Testament, but, curiously enough, almost every book of any importance had been printed before the Greek text of the New Testament; and in 1516, one of the great years of the world's history, when Erasmus, the famous Dutch scholar, produced the first printed Greek text, he had only four very bad and late manuscripts to work with; being unable to find any complete manuscript of the Revelation, the best he could do, in order to make his text complete, was to re-

translate the missing verses from the Latin version into Greek.

But gradually, as scholars ransacked the libraries of old towns, the wastepaper-baskets of monasteries and other unlikely places, better manuscripts began to make their appearance; and for the four manuscripts of Erasmus, we now have an immense number from which to determine the true text. Our earliest Greek manuscripts were written probably about the year A.D. 350, but we have also to help us translations into Latin and into Syriac which were made many years earlier than that, and also the quotations made from the New Testament by the earliest Christian writers; of these last, we have an increasing number from the year A.D. 130 onwards. The labour of weeding out all the mistakes and of sorting all this mass of evidence was enormous; we owe most to two Cambridge scholars, Bishop Westcott and Dr. Hort, who worked together for twenty-two years, and at last produced in 1885 a really good text of the New Testament.

Even the worst manuscripts, though they contain very many errors on every page, are not so bad as seriously to obscure the essential Gospel; and in the text of Erasmus and that of Stephanus, which succeeded it,[1] there are perhaps no passages where error of doctrine is involved in error of text. But surely every Christian must desire to read the words of our Lord and the Apostles in the most exact and reliable form possible; and it is towards exactitude that the whole of "Textual Criticism" is directed.

[1] This is curiously known as the "received text," "*Textus Receptus*," and was in common use for three centuries.

When we read the text of Westcott and Hort or of more recent editors, we may feel sure that we are not far from the original words of the documents written by the Apostles. Our authorities for the New Testament text are far better than those for any other ancient book; for very many classical authors, we are dependent on two manuscripts or even on one; for the New Testament, we have at least twenty important manuscripts, apart from countless others of less importance, as well as the collateral evidence of versions and quotations. In three or four passages, none of them doctrinally significant, the original reading seems really to have been lost; in others, there is a small measure of uncertainty; but on the whole, we can confidently assert that the text of the New Testament is guaranteed by unshakable evidence as accurate and reliable.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the Bible in Western Europe was almost exclusively read in Latin; but with the Reformation came the impulse to give the people the word of God in their own tongue. The pioneer in England was John Wyclif in the fourteenth century; but on the whole, our greatest debt is to William Tyndale, whose translation (finished in 1526 and published in Germany, because it was impossible to publish it in England), formed the basis of all the later versions. The Authorised Version of 1611, probably the only great work ever carried through by a committee, is the greatest of English classics and perhaps the finest translation of the Bible in any language. We may regret it was made before the best manuscripts had come to light and the science of Textual Criticism had given us a

more accurate Greek text; and the time for a new translation was fully ripe when our revisers in 1881 produced their completed work; the Revised Version, as we call it, was made with every help which modern scholarship could give, and what it loses in familiarity and magnificence of language, it more than gains by its greater accuracy and fidelity to the original.[1]

4. *Methods of New Testament Study*

Most people begin their study of the New Testament by reading it day by day a few verses at a time, and this is a way of approach which no one, however old or learned, can afford to neglect. Bishop Moule of Durham, saint and scholar, used, to the end of his life, to read the New Testament straight through at the rate of a chapter a day, choosing daily a text or thought to live by through the day. To most people time and opportunity for more careful study come only at irregular intervals, if they come at all; but no one is too busy to find five or even three minutes in the early morning for Bible-reading; and it is impossible to overrate the value of this practice. Only it must be taken seriously, responsibly and systematically.

This is a beginning, but we must not remain content with that. Experts in pictures, when they visit a picture-gallery, always take a magnifying glass with them, in order to study at close quarters

[1] The story of the recovery of the text of the New Testament is a fascinating one; the best popular book on the subject is still Sir F. G. Kenyon's *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*.

the detailed perfection of some great masterpiece; but they also stand back some distance from a picture in order to grasp its general meaning and the grouping and proportion of its parts. No one in his senses reads a novel at the rate of a page a day; and if we are to understand and know the New Testament, it is important that we should read it sometimes as we read an ordinary book, in long continuous stretches. The books are much shorter (and much more interesting) than we generally imagine; the longest of all, the Acts of the Apostles, can be read easily in an afternoon (try it on a wet Sunday afternoon); the Epistle to the Romans in forty minutes, St Mark's Gospel in a little under an hour. Reading at large in this way, we are able to obtain a general outline of what each author is trying to say, and of the manner in which he says it.

As soon as we depart from mere reading, the first principle to follow is that of the interpretation of Scripture by Scripture. The simplest method is to take a leading subject and follow it all through the New Testament. Perhaps the most obvious and practical subject to suggest is that of prayer; we have first our Lord's practice and teaching as recorded in the Gospels; then the prayer-life of the early Church seen in practice in the Acts of the Apostles, and in theory in the detailed instructions given by the other writers to their converts; and, finally, the very interesting evidence of the Revelation. A fascinating study is afforded by what scholars call the Parousia and ordinary people the Second Coming of Christ; it is surprising to find how much is said about it in almost every book of the

New Testament. Sometimes it is of value to make our study centre in a person. Of Paul we shall have much to say later on, and the outlines of his life and work are familiar to most people from school divinity lessons; but there is a number of minor characters, Luke, Apollos, Titus, and there are a good many others who keep reappearing in unexpected places, and of whom we can form more or less connected biographies. To come down even more to details there is a special importance and fascination in the study of individual words. Experiment will easily show the truth of the statement. Take, for example, the concluding words of the Lord's Prayer as we use it, "the kingdom, the power and the glory," and follow each of them through the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation; observe how each passage contributes something, until the full meaning is gradually unfolded. Or take any of the great words of Paul—faith, righteousness, holiness, or of John—light, life, love, and see how each of these words gathers round itself a cluster of great sayings, which fit together like the parts of an elaborate mosaic.

All these lines of study can be pursued with the help of nothing besides a good reference Bible; but external helps abound, and it would be foolish to neglect them where they can be useful. For the study of some of the Epistles and the Revelation, books are almost an essential. Paul, especially, is a difficult writer; a cursory reading of an Epistle is almost valueless, but it is a very good discipline to sit down to an Epistle with a really good commentary, and work hard until the argument is perfectly clear

and the meaning of even the more difficult passages begins to emerge. Books about the New Testament, good, bad and indifferent, abound ; a very few will be recommended in this book ; but only very few because this book is written to direct attention to the one Book itself ; those who need more can easily find access to them elsewhere. But one caution must be constantly borne in mind ; most writers are honest, but all are human, and all have presuppositions : it is therefore the height of folly to believe any statement merely because it is made in print. If it can be tested, test it ; if not, test the reliability of the author ; if there is the least doubt about a statement, keep it in your mind as a possibility, but do not base any further argument upon it. Learn by criticising ; the best authors welcome criticism.

5. *Materials for New Testament Study*

Every one ought to possess a favourite Bible which he habitually uses and which becomes an intimate personal friend. It is advisable to read in the Revised Version, since the Authorised, as was said above, was translated before the service of Textual Criticism, by giving us a good Greek text, and before modern scholarship, by increasing our knowledge of Greek, had enabled us to know more exactly what the original writers wrote and meant ; whereas the Revised, with all its inadequacies, is as nearly perfect a translation as we are likely to get in English. It will be found of very great help to have a Bible printed on strong paper with wide margins,

since the best of us have treacherous memories, and it is always wise to write down interesting things while we remember them. We are fortunate nowadays in having access to good translations of the New Testament into modern speech; the best is probably that by Dr. James Moffatt, which can now be obtained printed in parallel columns with the Authorised Version. Advantage should certainly be taken of these, but they should never be used except as a commentary; the two great versions will always be the standards of English Christianity, and with the text of one of these every one, as a member of the Church of Christ, ought to be familiar; as private individuals, we shall find it a help to turn to the newer versions for guidance in difficult places, or in order to obtain fresh light on a passage which has lost its meaning through familiarity; but it is an anti-social act to discard the great and classical versions.

Those who know Greek even a little have a priceless possession in that they can read the very words of the followers of our Lord. Passages which in English seem quite commonplace, throb, sparkle in the Greek. There are countless little details of phrasing which can hardly be reproduced in any other language. How impressive, for instance, to learn that Jesus "kept on saying Father forgive them." New and delightful connections like gossamer threads are seen to weave the whole together; to trace the cognates of a word like *δοκιμός* (*δοκίμιον*, *δοκιμάζω*, etc.), all through the New Testament is to enter a land of quite unexpectedly varied and delightful landscapes. Only the best

texts should be used; Westcott and Hort is still the standard, but the Oxford Greek Testament, edited by Dr. Souter, especially the admirable wide-margin form, is an excellent alternative. To read even two or three verses every day is a part of Christian education not to be lightly regarded.

The second requisite is a good map. The movements of our Lord in the Gospels, and of the Apostles in the Acts and Epistles, are confused and meaningless unless we have a fairly clear idea of places and distances, and of such important matters as mountains and trade-routes, much more important in those days of expensive and difficult travelling than in our own age of mechanical inventions and facilities.[1]

A few books only are necessary. It is well to keep a Concordance at one's elbow; for those who read Greek, Moulton and Geden's is very accurate and beautifully printed; for the ordinary reader the best is Young's, which by means of ingenious indices puts the reader who is quite ignorant of Greek and Hebrew very much in the position of the scholar. It is often essential to the understanding of a passage to be able to have easy access to the parallel passages in other parts of the Bible; and since many of these parallels are to be found in the Old Testament, it is important, whenever possible, to use a complete Bible, and not a New Testament printed separately.

But, after all, external appliances are only a

[1] One book on geography is so good that it deserves separate mention; this is Sir George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, which has gone through more than twenty editions already and is likely to go through twenty more.

secondary consideration; the real requisites are patience, prayer and an open mind; given these, everything else follows naturally, and no lack of equipment can prevent an honest and persistent seeker from finding in the New Testament a reward which will more than compensate him for all his expenditure of time and trouble. The promise that "the Comforter, the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things" (John xiv. 26) covers the whole realm of Bible study; the work of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration of Scripture is complemented and completed by His work in the explanation and application of Scripture.

II

THE WORLD TO WHICH JESUS CAME

A CHRISTIAN can regard the history of the world before the birth of Christ in no other way than as a long preparation for His coming. The Cross of Jesus is the symbol of the most important event in the whole life of the world, and

> "All the light of sacred story
> Beats upon its head sublime."

Much of this preparation we find recorded in the pages of the Old Testament. Through a series of great men who were lawgivers or poets or prophets, in war and peace, in prosperity and captivity, the wayward children of Israel had been brought back to the God who was to them both husband and father. The adventurous faith of Abraham, going out he knew not whither, the passionate earnestness of Elijah and Hosea and Isaiah, and the more sober, priestly godliness of Ezekiel and the Church which came back from exile under Ezra and Nehemiah—all had something to contribute to the idea and the knowledge of a God who is both terrible and loving, holy and forgiving, afar off and yet near. But, before the coming of Jesus, the Jewish Church had seen its best days; during His lifetime there were

two parties, one which was full of the good works of the Law, rather dry and formal, and another which was enlightened and critical and politely religious; and both were taken up a good deal with politics. The real strength of the whole nation was the "quiet in the land," the inconspicuously good, who still feared God and looked for the Coming One. For into the warp and woof of Jewish religion is woven the hope of the coming of Messiah, the Anointed of the Lord, who shall deliver Israel from His enemies. In type and prophecy, in vision and faint foreshadowing, the heroes of the Old Testament and of the troubled days "between the Testaments" had really "seen the Christ stand," who should be both Priest and Prophet and King, who should come to reign in righteousness.

But that was not all; in every land God is heard of all those who call upon Him. Far away from Palestine, about the time of Jeremiah, there began in Greece a succession of philosophers who truly sought God and in a measure found Him. Men began to ask questions about the world and mankind, and about the highest life for men, and about God; whether the old tales about Zeus and Athene and Aphrodite were not really foolish and wicked and unworthy of God. Plato, the greatest of the succession, among many great sayings, told his followers that the true and highest life for man is to be made as like God as possible, and in his view the way to win this likeness was to escape from the world, and in silence and retirement to lift up one's soul to God alone. Nearly all these thinkers made the mistake, which has been made also by very many

good Christians, of believing that this world of sense is an evil place, from which it is the duty of the wise man to try and escape. But they did, according to their light, desire the knowledge of God; the road of the Jew was the road of faith, that of the Greek was the road of knowledge and wisdom. One thing, however, was lacking to the Greeks; with all the brilliance of their art and splendour of their poetry, they had never fully grasped the idea that, to be like God, a man must be good.[1]

Greece was only a small corner of the world, and Athens had no knowledge of Nazareth and Bethlehem. The next stage of the world's preparation was the capture of the Eastern world by Greek ideas. This took place through the conquests of Alexander the Great, who, in the few years of his reign, in a series of magnificent campaigns overthrew Persia, entered India and secured himself the greatest Empire the world had yet seen; and then died (in 323 B.C.) at the age of thirty-two. Wherever he went, he took Greece with him, planting Greek cities on the Nile and the Tigris and the Orontes; making Greek the official language of the Empire, patronising Greek culture and education. To help on his plans he made allies of the cosmopolitan Jews, and thus bridged over the gap between Hellas and Palestine; some of the Jews who lived in Alexander's

[1] It is the profound sense of sin which makes the religion of Israel unique among the ancient religions of the world; nowhere else are religion and morality indissolubly bound together. It is for this reason that the Old Testament, no less than the New, is an indispensable weapon in the missionary's armoury; the New Testament assumes acquaintance with the moral standards of the Old.

Greek cities became more Greek than the Greeks themselves. So, at the time when Jesus came, everywhere from the pillars of Hercules in the far West to the snows of Afghanistan, there were living people who could write and talk and think in Greek, not the best Greek indeed, but still a splendid and versatile language, which the Christian Church was well advised to adopt as the means for the expression of its earliest thought.

But one thing was yet needed. Alexander had brought the known world into a unity such as it had never experienced before; but after his death his Empire fell in pieces, and there followed a time of terrible confusion and constant war. This was ended only by the appearance of a new power from the West, the armed might of Rome. No one quite knows how the Roman Empire grew up, but by a steady gradual pressure the petty Italian city of Servius Tullius and Cincinnatus had constantly extended her frontiers, until by the time of Augustus (63 B.C.-A.D. 14) she had mastered all the lands that lie about the Mediterranean. Rome's Empire brought with it three things; first, peace; the Roman historian Tacitus bitterly says that that was because there was no one left to fight: "they make a solitude and call it peace" (Tac. *Agricola*, 30). But though the rule of Rome was oppressive and often cruel, at worst it was better than the state of anarchy and endless inter-tribal wars which had drained the blood and strength of the nations before her coming. Secondly, Rome brought prosperity; in the early days, the governors of Roman provinces, being almost wholly uncontrolled, had

been often rapacious and unjust; but by the time of Augustus, the provinces were on the whole well governed and flourished exceedingly in trade and commerce. Finally, Rome made great roads; even in her beginning, when she had been no more than the head of a little group of Italian towns, she had made military roads to connect her with her subject cities, and in the days of her greatness she continued the process, until the whole Empire from Hadrian's wall to the Syrian desert was knit together by a framework of first-class highways. Travel was probably quicker and safer in the early Roman Empire than at any time till the nineteenth century and the invention of trains.

Thus Greek and Jew and Roman, each in his own way, prepared the road for the coming of the Christ and for the spread of His religion; and then, in the fulness of the times, the Christ came. It was a remarkable epoch in the history of the world; there is little exaggeration in Milton's great words:

> "No War or Battail's sound
> Was heard the World around;
> The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
> The hooked Chariot stood
> Unstained with hostile blood,
> The Trumpet spake not to the armed throng,
> And Kings sate still with awful eye,
> As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by."

After the thrilling events of the hundred years' Roman revolution, the world had settled down into unexampled tranquillity, broken only by obscure skirmishes on the Rhine and threatening murmurs

on the Euphrates. It was a time, too, of a strange bankruptcy in the religions of the world. Israel's faith, as we have seen, had grown dim and was stifled under the mountainous weight of ceremonies and ritual. Augustus had tried to revive the national gods of Italy—Jupiter, Juno and the rest, but in reality they were long since dead, and the revival of Augustus was no more than a pulling of strings that the marionettes might dance. Educated people on the whole were cynically irreligious; the lower classes were grossly superstitious, and really religious men like Vergil grasped at scattered fragments of truth wherever they could be found. Even philosophy had despaired of itself; it had given up the old noble quest for God and truth, and had come down to the lower problems of morality; even there it was interested not so much in great principles and ideas as in the pedestrian work of telling men what to do in the various circumstances of life. It could give men neither encouragement to set out for themselves on the "perilous paths of thinking," nor the power by which they might become masters of their own destinies.

At the time when Jesus was born, the Roman Empire had reached almost its greatest height of prosperity and power. No enemy in arms seriously menaced the safety of the imperial city; trade flourished; enormous wealth was steadily flowing into her treasuries and into the pockets of her citizens. It was the boast of Augustus that he had found a city of brick and had left a city of marble; the public buildings of Rome were no more than a fitting background to the riot of luxury and excess

to which the Roman people more and more surrendered themselves. Two hundred years later all was changed ; the barbarians from the North were thundering at the gates ; the order and stability of the Empire were seriously impaired ; that strange weariness which seems to beset nations after a long period of prosperity and civilisation had descended upon men's spirits and had plunged them in a deep and growing melancholy, in which they lacked increasingly the energy and vision to create new things or even to stem the tide of decay and disillusionment. The third century was a far more religious age than the first, but even religion could not provide the stimulus to heroic thought and action which alone could have saved the Roman World.

The time of the fall of the Roman Empire and of the collapse of the ancient civilisation was also the time of the rise of Christianity ; indeed, Christianity itself was one of the forces which helped to destroy the old and bring in the new. The new religion, planted in an obscure corner of the Empire, in the hearts of men prepared by the ancient faith of Israel, was flashed in the Greek language along all the trade-routes which the strong hand of Rome had made safe ; within two hundred years, it had passed the limits of the Roman world and had become what it has remained to this day, the greatest creative force in history. The early Christians believed that when Rome fell, the end of the world would come ; the Empire of Rome fell long ago and is now no more than a memory—" the grandeur that was Rome," and the end of the world seems

very little nearer than in the days of Jesus. But the religion of Jesus has gone on in changing forms and changing generations, establishing itself in new lands and new realms of man's being and thinking, and proving itself perpetually the greatest and most lasting power in the world.[1]

[1] Three books will be found to throw great light on this chapter; for the conditions of life among the Jews of our Lord's day, Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah;* for the period between the Testaments, Mr. Edwyn Bevan's *Jerusalem under the High Priests;* and for the general condition of the Roman Empire, Dill's *Social Life in the Roman Empire.*

III

HOW OUR GOSPELS WERE WRITTEN

1. *The Synoptic Problem*

Most Christians neither require nor desire any introduction to the Gospels; they are perfectly content to read the individual Gospels, or to use them as materials for the life of Christ, fitting together a connected narrative from fragments of the four. Since the purpose of the Gospels is to bring their readers into living fellowship with a living Lord, where this result has been attained, criticism, at all times the servant and not the mistress of religion, dare not intrude on those who have neither need nor desire for her services. But there are some Christians whose minds are so constructed that honesty compels them to face the various critical questions which arise from the fourfold Gospel; and there are others who must needs attempt the historical verification of the narratives before they can commit themselves to the adventure of reading the Gospels in the adoring spirit of the writers and of the Early Church for which they wrote.[1] The

[1] My personal opinion is that it is the duty of all educated Christians to familiarise themselves at least with the outline of the critical and historical verification of the Gospel narratives. The only safeguard against extravagant criticism is the wide dissemination of sound knowledge on these very important matters.

critical approach is not the most interesting, but it need not by any means be valueless ; close attention to critical problems demands most minute study, and even a general appreciation of the critical situation requires far more careful reading of the Gospels than that which the casual reader bestows on them. Those who follow this chapter and its recommendations will find that they acquire an exact and independent knowledge of the text of the Gospels, a clearer perception of the characteristics of each individual Gospel, and an acquaintance with those details of presentation which add so much to the vividness of our picture of the earthly life of Christ.[1] The suspicion which many people feel for New Testament criticism, is due to the fact that many critics have forgotten to " take their shoes from off their feet, for the place whereon they stand is holy ground." This is a caution which needs to be constantly borne in mind, but the best criticism is humble, reverent and devoted only to the truth.

The first problem which must strike even the uncritical reader of the Gospels, is occasioned by the fact that our Gospels fall into two clearly marked groups ; the fourth Gospel stands alone as the product of a later generation and of more matured

[1] I cannot refrain from quoting for the encouragement of the puzzled a fine sentence from the late Dr. Stanton, a lifelong student of these problems: " The fact that in pursuing these inquiries a fuller and more accurate knowledge of the actual contents of the Gospels will be acquired should be an encouragement to those who are inclined to be disheartened by the difficulties of the subject, the variety of views with which they will be confronted, and the intricacy of the considerations on which decisions must depend. Their labour cannot be wholly thrown away."

thought ; its differences in subject-matter, in style, in presentment of the person of Christ, must become obvious in an hour's study. The details of this problem we may more conveniently leave for our section on the fourth Gospel. The other three Gospels tell each the same story and tell it each very much in the same way : for this reason they are generally called the Synoptic Gospels ; it is possible to arrange them in a synopsis, " a single view," in parallel columns, matching incident with incident and speech with speech. The second problem is expressed in the question " Are these three Gospels independent witnesses, deriving their material only from tradition handed down by word of mouth ? Or are their similarities so great that we must suppose them to be in some way dependent on one another ? "

When the Synoptic Gospels began to be studied critically, and compared in the passages where comparison is possible, it was found that they sometimes ran together word for word, that sometimes differences, greater or less, occurred and sometimes the order of events and sayings varied in the different Gospels. It was further noticed that almost everything recorded by Mark is told also by Matthew and Luke ; and far the simplest explanation of the great similarities and occasional differences is that Matthew and Luke were writing with Mark's Gospel in front of them.[1] Any reader can satisfy

[1] That Mark was the earliest Gospel, and that Mark was the basis of Matthew and Luke seem to be two of the few indisputable conclusions of modern criticism. Professor Gwatkin is right in saying that no theory of the origin of the Gospels is satisfactory which does not allow for the influence of oral tradition, but I know no first-rate authority who now holds the purely "oral" theory. Bishop

himself as to the evidence for this statement by carefully comparing Mark iv. 1-9, 13-20 with Luke viii. 4-8, 11-15 and Matt. xiii. 1-9, 18-23 (the parable of the Sower and its interpretation); and Mark vi. 35-44 with Luke ix. 12-17 and Matt. xiv. 15-21 (the feeding of the five thousand). Matthew and Luke have rewritten the stories, shortening them and adapting them to their particular purpose; but they are the same stories, down to minute peculiarities of Mark's narrative.

It was then noticed that where Matthew and Luke tell us of events not recorded in Mark, they sometimes agree very closely; a very typical example is the account of the Temptation (Matt. iv. 1-11; Luke iv. 1-13; contrast Mark i. 12-13),[1] or of the Discourse of our Lord against the Pharisees (Matt. xxiii; Luke xi. 37-53). It is very striking that both Matthew and Luke have accounts of the Sermon on the Mount, whereas Mark has not. From these resemblances it has been inferred (but it is to be remembered that this is no more than a very probable guess) that Matthew and Luke had another written source before them, and this scholars have agreed to call Q (from the German word Quelle = Source). Of course Q, if it ever existed in written form, disappeared long ago; but the name remains a convenient designation for those

Westcott held that view, but his conclusions were reached before 1860, and he never in the remaining forty years of his life allowed himself the opportunity of reconsidering those views in the light of the immense amount of sound work which was done by others between 1860 and 1900.

[1] Note that while the general similarity is very close, Matthew and Luke record the second and third temptations in the opposite order to one another.

parts of the Gospel story which are common to Matthew and Luke but are not found in Mark. But even then we have not finished; both Matthew and Luke have many incidents and sayings which are peculiar to them, that is to say, are not found in any other Gospel; sometimes the same saying is repeated more than once in the same Gospel in different contexts, and there are endless differences of detail in the different accounts of the same incident (see specially the sayings Matt. x. 38, xvi. 24; Mark viii. 34, x. 21; Luke ix. 23, xiv. 27).

The Gospels are unique in ancient literature; there is no other instance in which we possess four biographies of a man, all written within a century of his death, and by men who had excellent opportunities of access to reliable information about him; the main events in the life and death of our Lord (including the resurrection and the empty tomb) are far better guaranteed than many events in ancient secular history. But it is important to remember that the Gospels are not four completely independent accounts (as Kings and Chronicles in the Old Testament are not independent), but are closely connected by subtle affinities and interdependencies not always easy to define. The view which we take of the origin of the Gospels will necessarily be presupposed in, and underlie, our study of the making of the Gospels and of our four Gospels themselves.

2. *The Making of the Gospels*

In attempting to tell the story of how our Gospels were written, we have to bear in mind the circum-

stances of the early Church for which they were originally written, and so to anticipate to some extent our study of the Acts of the Apostles. We learn from the first chapters of the Acts that the earliest believers in Jesus were all Jews, and this we could easily guess from the fact that the earliest preaching of the disciples was in Jerusalem. The events concerning Jesus of Nazareth had not been done in a corner, but were familiar to all the dwellers in Jerusalem. The task of the early preachers of Christ was therefore twofold, to convince their hearers that Jesus had really risen from the dead, and to convince them that He was the promised Messiah foretold by the Old Testament Scriptures. For the proof of the resurrection, mere assertion was not sufficient and that, too, had to be demonstrated as necessary for the fulfilment of the Old Testament; so the first business of the disciples was the gathering together of all those passages of the Scriptures in which they saw Christ foreshadowed and foretold. This process can be seen at work in the New Testament, for example, in Peter's speech in Acts ii.; the text from Psalm xvi, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," became a favourite text of Christian argument, and Christ had already applied to Himself Psalm cx. 1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou upon my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." It is probable that at a very early date, these passages were collected into a book which was very much used by the Christians in their arguments with Jews. When we read in Acts xviii. 25 that Apollos expounded "the things concerning Jesus," this can hardly mean that he

preached Christ, as he was not yet himself a Christian; what he was doing was probably to expound the prophetic Scriptures, and explain what sort of a person the Messiah might be expected to be.

But the earliest Christian preaching did not consist merely in arguments with the Jews; when the Christians met together for worship and prayer, they would wish to recall as much as possible of the Master's teaching and apply it to all their problems and difficulties. All the disciples had not been with Jesus all the time, and it would be necessary for them to supplement one another's memories; Peter might tell what the Lord had said on the Mount of Transfiguration, Philip what He had said at the feeding of the five thousand, John would recall how at the Last Supper, Jesus had whispered to him the sign by which he might recognise the traitor. And so, as these stories were constantly repeated, there grew up a kind of regular body of accepted knowledge about the Master's teaching—a group of parables with just enough introduction to make intelligible the circumstances in which the words were said, a few of the longer discourses, a certain number of isolated sayings, arranged in groups according to subject; a striking example of these grouped sayings is Mark ix. 49-50, where the connecting link of the different sayings is the word "salt."

Here then we have the beginning of the Collection of Sayings known to scholars as Q. It is hard to say exactly what was contained in this document (if document it was, and not merely a collection of tradition orally handed down). Some people believe that it was a real history of the life of Jesus, reaching

at least to the point of His death, and giving a narrative of the Passion; others that it was merely a collection of sayings with brief introduction. We shall never know with certainty; but there is one precious fragment of very early evidence; Papias, who lived less than a hundred years after our Lord, tells us that "Matthew composed the sayings, Oracles (λόγια), in the Hebrew tongue and everyone translated them as he was able." It is not at all likely that this refers to our first Gospel, which is a great deal more than a collection of sayings, and perhaps Papias was really referring to that original collection of sayings which was used by the writers of our first and third Gospels. If we may make a rough guess at its contents, it contained the story of John the Baptist and of the Temptation, the Sermon on the Mount, the Missionary Instructions to the disciples, the woes pronounced on the scribes and Pharisees and many of the parables which are given by Matthew or Luke or both. That the Matthew to whom Papias refers was the Apostle Matthew there can be no reasonable doubt.

But very soon the Gospel began to be preached beyond the borders of Palestine and to people who had never heard of Jesus; and instruction of a rather different kind was needed. The question asked by the hearer would be not "What did Jesus say?" but "Who was Jesus, and what did He do?" The oldest Creed we possess, the Creed which was recited at Rome perhaps as early as A.D. 100 by people about to be baptized, contained references to the historic events of our Lord's life, including His crucifixion under Pontius Pilate. The mission-

ary preacher to the Gentiles, as soon as he has proclaimed salvation in the name of Christ, must go back and tell his hearers something of the earthly life of the Master ; only so can he build them up as a Church walking according to the precepts of Christ and fulfilling a righteousness better than that of the scribes and Pharisees. Thus there came to be felt a need for an account of the life (as distinct from the teaching) of Christ. Luke tells us that he had many predecessors in his task of writing a Gospel ; but probably the earliest and much the most important of these lives of Christ was that which we possess to this day as the Gospel of Mark.

This Gospel was written under the influence of Peter,[1] and contains, we may suppose, the preaching which he was accustomed to give. There seems to be good reason for supposing that it was written for the benefit of the Church at Rome, and at latest it was written some forty years after the death of Jesus, when there were people still alive who had known Him and could test by their memories the accuracy of the writer. Mark was the first to give a coherent and orderly presentation of the life of Jesus. He set things out apparently in the historical order in which they happened, and as we read his vivid narrative, it is impossible not to feel ourselves in touch with a real historical person.

But Mark had not written down all he knew, and he had not nearly exhausted the material about Jesus which was available for the historian ; there was still ample room for Matthew and Luke to do for

[1] Tradition and the contents of the Gospel combine to give us confidence as to the correctness of this assertion.

other readers what Mark had done for the Romans. As we have seen reason to believe, they wrote with Mark's Gospel by them, and, as we think, with the "collection of sayings," at least, in their mind; but each had besides other material of his own, and we naturally ask whence he derived it. In the case of Luke, the answer is not difficult to give; he spent at least two years in Palestine while Paul was in prison at Cæsarea, and though he had not been himself a follower of Christ, it is reasonable to suppose that he met the leaders of the Jerusalem Church and others who had known our Lord in the flesh. There is a very old tradition that he went to visit the Virgin Mary, in order to learn the details of the events connected with the birth of Christ; and the atmosphere of those first two chapters of his Gospel is so Jewish that they can hardly have been written anywhere but in Palestine. It is interesting, too, to remember that Mark and Luke were both friends of Paul, and were with him while he was in prison at Rome (Col. iv. 10, 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11); they must have known one another well, perhaps talked over the Gospels which they had written or were intending to write. "Matthew" was writing for Jewish Christians and probably in Palestine; if he was the Apostle Matthew, then we need ask no further as to his source—he had his own recollections to draw upon; if he was not the Apostle, and this seems more likely, he was, at any rate, near the centre of the earliest Christianity, and, after the Jerusalem community was scattered, there must have been many who spread abroad knowledge of the Lord's doings by word of mouth. However much we may

believe that written documents lie behind our Gospels, we can never have a satisfactory account of the way in which they were written unless we bear constantly in mind that the earliest knowledge of Christ was always given orally, and that much must have survived for a generation or two which never found its way into any written book.

This consideration brings us appropriately to the last of our Gospels, that according to John. We shall deal in detail later with the special contributions made by this Gospel to our knowledge of Christ; but it is obvious on a single reading that it treads in different paths from the Synoptic Gospels. But when we consider those differences, we must bear in mind the great body of floating but quite authentic tradition which must have existed in the early days. We must not forget, for example, that Luke in Acts xx. 35 has preserved for us a stray saying, which is not recorded in any Gospel; that great manuscript "Codex Bezae," now in the University Library at Cambridge, has, after Luke vi. 4, an extra verse about a man working on the Sabbath Day, which may quite possibly be a genuine saying of Christ; and there are preserved here and there in stray places what are called "unwritten sayings"—sayings of our Lord which are preserved nowhere in the New Testament.

The Gospels are very short books; all the incidents which they relate happened on about forty days in the life of our Lord; all the sayings which they record might have been spoken in about six hours on one of the long winter evenings which we may suppose the Lord to have spent with His disciples. Of the little that we have, a great deal

is repetition; many incidents are recorded three or even four times. It is amazing how little we know of the life of Christ. But it is still more amazing how satisfactory and complete that little is; it is impossible to exhaust those little books; the more they are read, the more they generate spiritual light in the reader, and by that light it becomes apparent how much more there is to be explored. In spite of all their differences in detail, which with our limited knowledge are often hard to explain, in spite of the problems which surround their origin, each of them gives a true and clear portrait, and the subject of the portrait is the same, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. No one can honestly claim to be His follower and lover who has not read and pondered the Gospels which tell us all we know of His life, and which give in clearest outline the plan of God for the redemption of the world.

Note to Chapter III

Books on the Synoptic problem are innumerable, and most of them are large, difficult and expensive; the names of the most important can be discovered by referring to the article "Gospel" in any standard theological dictionary or encyclopædia. The fact of the matter is that the best way in which to study the problem is to work with nothing but three New Testaments; a synopsis is useful, but it is better to make a synopsis oneself; all those which have been printed are based upon the presuppositions of their compilers, and it should be our aim to study without any presuppositions at all.

Many lines of work are possible ; the best starting-point is to take Mark's narrative and compare it with the other two Evangelists in all the passages where they correspond ; the use of three different coloured inks will show clearly which words are reproduced in Matthew and Luke, which in Matthew only, which in Luke only, and how few are left altogether unreproduced. A good passage for comparison is the story of the healing of the paralytic—Mark ii. 3-12 ; Matt. ix. 2-8 ; Luke v. 18-26.

MARK	MATTHEW	LUKE
And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was : and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay. And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak ? he blasphemeth : who can forgive sins but one, even God ? And straightway Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your	And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed : and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven. And behold certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts ? For whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven ; or to say, Arise and walk ? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy	And behold, men bring on a bed a man that was palsied : and they sought to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And not finding by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the house-top, and let him down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And seeing their faith he said, Man thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone ? But Jesus perceiving their reasonings, answered and said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee ; or to say,

MARK	MATTHEW	LUKE
hearts? Whether is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose, and straightway took up the bed and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed.	bed and go unto thy house. And he arose and departed to his house.	Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith unto him that was palsied) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto Thy house. And immediately he rose up before them and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house, glorifying God. And amazement took hold on all.

Here it is clear that it is the same story which is being told, and the agreement in the narratives is very close; note that in each narrative the words "he saith to the sick of the palsy" are enclosed in parentheses. But notice also the significant differences: the account in Matthew is much shorter, and Luke speaks of tiles, which must be broken or prised up, where Mark, more exactly retaining the impression of Syrian life, speaks of "digging through" (so it is in the Greek). Those who know Greek will observe that each of the Evangelists has his own word for "bed."[1]

A second approach is afforded by the study of the order of events. Again Mark may be used as the basis; it will be found that Luke more often keeps and Matthew more often changes the Marcan order.

[1] It will be found that correspondences are far closer in the words of our Lord than in the narratives; this is exactly what we should expect if Matthew and Luke were rewriting the life of Christ on the basis of Mark's story.

But it is also of value to compare Matthew and Luke in this respect: the differences in arrangement are very striking, for example, the sayings of Christ which Matthew has collected in the Sermon on the Mount are scattered by Luke over Chapters vi. xi. xii. xiii. xvi. of his Gospel.

A study of this kind should familiarise us with the exact details, as far as they can be known to us, of our Lord's life, and it should lend vividness to our impression of the individual Gospels. One caution must be borne in mind; it is easy to exaggerate discrepancies at the expense of the general agreement; often the peculiarities in one narrative tend to confirm, corroborate and complement the other two; in many cases, it will be found that the differences are not of fact but of presentation, and fall within the limits of the justifiable freedom of one who aims at portraiture and not at photography.

IV

THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL

It is no accident that the life of Christ has been preserved to us in four distinct representations. Whatever be the connections between them, the Gospels stand entire as individual wholes; each author is guided throughout by one dominant purpose, and he has produced a book and not a scrap-book, a portrait, not a collection of anecdotes; in the most difficult art of biography, leaving inspiration aside, the Evangelists stand admittedly supreme. The significance of the Life of lives could not be exhausted in a single book, any more than it can be wholly appropriated in the experience of a single individual; the four presentments stress each one aspect of the person, life and work of the Incarnate Son of God; the fourfold narrative corresponds to real and permanent tendencies in human personality, and each Gospel has found a special significance in different periods of the Church's history. From an early period it was customary to symbolise the Gospels (though not with complete unanimity) by the four living creatures of Ezekiel's vision, the lion, the man, the ox, the eagle. Those who desire a Saviour who combines majesty, humility, patience and sublimity, royalty, humanity, sacrifice and deity cannot afford to neglect any of the four pictures

which preserve for us all that we need to know of the days of His flesh.

1. *The Gospel according to St Mark*

Whatever the perplexities of symbolism, Mark's Gospel is really and gloriously the Gospel of the manhood of Christ. This little book is the earliest of our sources for the life of Christ, and that which comes nearest to the standpoint of those who knew Him first only as the carpenter of Nazareth (vi. 3); it is therefore the most important book in the world. Unfortunately, it is possible to read it and hear it read times without number without realising anything of its extraordinary originality and independence, the force and vividness and beauty of its presentation and the challenge which it presents to mind and conscience.

The beginning of our study should be to read the Gospel straight through, endeavouring to read it as though its story were quite fresh to us; and then to write down as much (and it will be surprisingly little and inaccurate) as we can remember.[1] The Gospel, we shall find, is very simply written, and from a purely literary point of view might not rank very high. The writer had had no training in the art of writing and of the construction of books; his sentences are generally short and simple, and the clauses are connected in the Hebrew style by almost

[1] This Chapter deals mainly with the human element in the life of Christ. It is worth while to devote a second reading to noticing everything which separates Him from the common run of men, and constitutes a claim to supernatural authority and dignity.

unvaried series of " ands." " *And* straightway coming out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon . . . now Simon's wife's mother lay in a fever, *and* straightway they tell him of her *and* coming he raised her clasping her hand, *and* the fever left her *and* she ministered unto them." Although he is writing a short book, he seems sometimes from a modern point of view to waste space; there is a detailed explanation of Jewish customs in vii. 3, 4, which breaks the sequence of the narrative; and a long footnote on the death of John the Baptist, introduced in vi. 14-29, between the beginning and the end of the Mission of the Disciples. But there is danger of mistaking the simplicity of Mark for commonplaceness; it is far from that; it is more like the simplicity of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, a thin veil over profound depths of wisdom and spiritual insight.

The Gospel begins very abruptly; after a brief introduction on John the Baptist, Jesus is suddenly brought on the stage, and then, without a hint as to His early life and upbringing, with a brief note on His baptism and temptation, we go almost straight on to His ministry in Galilee. The Gospel is hardly to be called a life of Jesus; it may rather be compared to a great religious drama, in which the centre of interest is the question " Who is this Jesus ? " The reader is left in no doubt as to the answer, and it is made clear that Jesus Himself knew it from the start; in the scene of His baptism, He is addressed by a voice from Heaven as God's beloved Son (i. 11). But in the main body of the Gospel, Mark is unfolding to us the impression which He made on those

who met Him, and the judgments which they passed on Him; from the standpoint of history, it was not He but they who were being judged.

The first answer which is suggested to the great question is that Jesus is a very human, very busy man. Mark is deeply interested in simple trivial things; the grass where the five thousand were fed was green (vii. 39), the fragments of the broken loaves and fishes were collected on one occasion in rope-baskets, on the other in wicker-baskets (vi. 43; viii. 8), the paralytic was brought to Jesus carried by his *four* friends (ii. 3), there were two thousand pigs (v. 13). And he implies that Jesus had the same interest in the things of everyday life. What pictures He could draw; of the sower on his rough mountain field (perhaps He was watching him from the boat as He talked) (iv. 3-9); of the lamp which had got hidden under the bed (iv. 21, 22; perhaps Peter's wife was bringing in the lamps as He talked); of the camel trying to squeeze through the needle's eye (x. 25). He was fond of little children, too, taking them in His arms and blessing them (x. 16), and remembering that Jairus' little daughter would want something to eat after her long illness (v. 43). In every aspect of human life He shared; He was sometimes tired and hungry (vi. 31), "they took Him with them in the boat as He was," and in spite of the storm He was soon peacefully "asleep on a pillow in the stern of the boat" (iv. 36-8. Only Mark notices that hard steersman's cushion). He asks questions: "How many loaves have ye? go and see" (vi. 38); He is indignant (x. 14), and angry;

"He looked round on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts" (iii. 5);[1] His works of healing cost Him something to perform (v. 30). When he has to describe the terrible scene of Gethsemane, Mark can hardly find words strong enough to tell of the weakness and sorrow of the Master: "He began to be amazed and to be very heavy; my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (xiv. 32-4).

During the time of His ministry, Jesus was extremely busy; the narrative hastens breathlessly on from point to point; *immediately* they left their nets, *immediately* he called them, *immediately* in the synagogue he began to teach, *immediately* there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit (i. 18, 20, 21, 23); sometimes, there were so many coming and going that there was not even time to eat (vi. 31). It is instructive to trace His journeyings on the map; sometimes they are dismissed with a general phrase, "He went about all the villages teaching" (vi. 6), but more often the name of the place is given—Bethsaida (vi. 45), Gennesaret (vi. 53), Tyre (vii. 24), Decapolis (vii. 31), and so on till the last journey to Jerusalem. In every place, He is depicted as surrounded by crowds, from whom He sometimes seeks to escape (ii. 4; iii. 20; v. 21, 24), and wherever He is to be found He is always engaged in the work of healing and teaching (i. 32-4; vi. 55, 56).

But to say that Jesus was human is very far from saying that He was ordinary; that mistake was

[1] From the Greek we learn that the anger was momentary; not so the sorrow.

made by His fellow-countrymen, who could see no further than His rough carpenter's clothes, and at whose unbelief He marvelled (vi. 1-6). The key-note of all the ministry of Jesus is, on His side, power, and on the side of those who saw Him amazement. What we call His miracles are to Mark *δυνάμεις*, mighty works, powers; He claims it Himself (ii. 10; xiv. 62); He promises it to His disciples for their work (iii. 15; vi. 7); He teaches as one having authority and not as the scribes, and accordingly "they were amazed at His doctrine" (i. 22), "they were amazed with great amazement" (v. 42), "they were very exceedingly amazed, saying He hath done all things well" (vii. 37).

It was inevitable that such manifestations of power should provoke the question, "Who is this Jesus?" Two unfavourable answers are recorded. His family thought He must be mad (a fate which has befallen also a good many of His followers); and the religious authorities held that the power was undeniable, but that its source was not divine but diabolic; and this utter confusion of good with evil Jesus describes as an eternal sin (iii. 20-9). Among serious-minded people, the answer most generally given was that He was a prophet like one of the prophets of the Old Testament line, perhaps one of the old prophets come to life again. "People were saying[1] that John the Baptist was risen from the dead; others were saying that He was Elias, others that He was a prophet as one of the prophets" (vi. 14-15). There was some justification for this

[1] *ἔλεγεν*—a reading which is supported by few but good manuscripts, and which gives a better sense than *ἔλεγον*.

opinion; His brief prophetic message, "Repent and believe the Gospel," accompanied by an outburst of healing power, might well lead those familiar with the Old Testament to believe that they were back in the days of Elijah and Elisha. The realisation that He was more than a prophet came only gradually, and never to very many people; but it proved to be the dividing line between those who were on His side and those who were against Him.

Moreover, it must be noted that He nowhere clearly states His claims; a faith called out only by His miracles or by His express claim to be the Son of God is not enough for Him; those who are to accept Him are to do so, then as now, in the clear light of their own spiritual understanding. He is revealing Himself all the time to those who have eyes to see, but from the majority He seems to be deliberately hiding Himself. Over and over again we find this attempt to remain hidden; when the evil spirit greets Him as the Holy One of God, Jesus replies "Be silent" (i. 25); "and he suffered not the devils to speak because they knew Him" (i. 34); those who are healed are bidden not to reveal Him—"see that thou say nothing to any man" (vii. 36). The Canaanitish woman comes to Him against His desire; "He entered into an house and would not that any man should know it" (vii. 24); in the great scene at Cæsarea Philippi, immediately after Peter's words, "Thou art the Christ," He charged them that they should tell no man concerning Him (viii. 30). That this was no chance series of remarks but a definite policy, we

learn from iv. 11, "to you is given the secret of the Kingdom of Heaven; but to those that are without all things are done in parables." Mark's Gospel is the Gospel of the Hidden Christ.

But gradually one and another came to understand; not at all the people one would expect—the evil spirits start by recognising Him as the Son of God (iii. 11); the Canaanitish woman addresses Him as Lord (vii. 28), and with her, as a discerning Gentile, may be ranked the Centurion who stood at the Cross and said, "Truly this man was a Son of God" (xv. 39). At last the little group of disciples received the message; they were very slow, so slow that Mark for once deserts his habit of pure narration and comments on the fact that "they understood not the matter of the loaves, but their heart was hardened" (vi. 52). But at last in answer to the direct question, "Who say ye that I am?" Peter replies, "Thou art the Christ" (viii. 29). It was not the first time that they had suspected that He must be the Messiah, the Anointed of the Lord; but now their faith had been tested and stood the strain of His poverty and ill-success, so different from anything which had ever been expected of the Messiah. From this time onward Jesus can speak far more openly, preparing them for the much greater shock and disappointment of His death; three times over He warns them of what is coming (viii. 31; ix. 31; x. 33). Now He boldly claims service in the name of "the Lord" (xi. 3), and rides into Jerusalem as a king in triumph (xi. 9-11); the parable of the wicked husbandmen contains a fairly clear indication as to the iden-

tity of the heir (xii. 1-12); He foretells His return in glory, but still under the allusive title of the Son of Man (xiii. 26). But it is not until His trial that He makes His claim in so many words; when the High Priest, departing from all the laws of justice, asks the prisoner to bear witness against Himself, "Art thou the Christ the son of the Blessed?" He replies, "I am" (xiv. 61, 62). The secret so well kept from all but the spiritually discerning is now openly confessed, and, on the inevitable charge of blasphemy, Jesus is condemned to death.

In reading the Gospel, it is impossible not to be struck by the fact that more than a third of it is taken up with the events of less than a week; the impressive emphasis thus laid on the trial and death of Jesus corresponds to and explains the shadow of the Cross which lies over the whole Gospel. Long before the tragedy of Calvary, long even before that last journey when we are told that Jesus was deeply troubled (such, I believe, is the true reading), and His followers were afraid (x. 32), events had begun to prepare the way for the final disaster. The passionate hatred which led to the Crucifixion is only the climax of the long-drawn opposition of the religious leaders of the day. This opposition and its causes should be carefully traced through the Gospel; it began when He healed a demoniac on the Sabbath Day (i. 21-6); it was made worse by the ceremonial defilement which He contracted through touching the leper (i. 41); the healing of the paralytic and the sharp rebuke administered to the scribes made the war truceless (ii. 1-12),

and it needed only the healing of the man with the withered hand to make the Pharisees and the Herodians, traditional enemies, take counsel together that they might destroy Him (iii. 6). It seems clear that they understood at least dimly what His purpose was, and that their knowledge, instead of calling out their reverence and allegiance, provoked their bitterest hatred ; the note of tragedy which underlies this, as all the Gospels, is that He was rejected by exactly the people who ought to have recognised Him, and accepted only by the poor, the outcast and the fallen ; and this sorrow also He turned into joy.

Of the meaning of the death of Christ, Mark says practically nothing ; but that is his way, his business is to record the facts as he knew them, not to interpret or criticise ; apart from the one saying, " The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many " (x. 45), there is hardly a word to show that Mark knew anything at all of all that Paul had found of redemption and new life in the Cross of Christ. Even more striking is his story of the resurrection ; we are told that certain women went early to the tomb of Jesus, found the stone rolled away, saw a " young man " who told them " he is awaked ; he is not here," and then that coming out, they fled from the tomb, for trembling and amazement came upon them, and they said nothing to any man for they were afraid (xvi. 8). Two of our best manuscripts stop at this point, and the others give two distinct endings to the Gospel, one of which is printed in the Revised Text, and the other in the Revised

Margin ; of these the former is said in an Armenian manuscript of the Gospel to have been written by a disciple named Aristion. There can be little doubt that we are not in possession of the original ending of the Gospel.[1] Varying theories have been put forward to account for this, as that Mark was prevented by death from ever finishing his book, or that at some time the last leaf was torn off, and these different endings added to give to the Gospel an appearance of completeness. But it is just possible that we have all that Mark meant us to have. xvi. 8 is a highly characteristic verse ; fear and amazement we have found all through the Gospel ; the secrecy which says nothing to any man was constantly being demanded by the Lord Himself. The Gospel would then end as abruptly as it began ; Mark, having stated the fact of the empty tomb and of the resurrection, feels that he has done his work. Of the risen Christ, no man can learn anything except by that spiritual understanding which expresses itself in love and service of Him ; the resurrection is, like the Kingdom of Heaven, to the unbelieving a mystery, to the believer a secret revealed. The real conclusion of the Gospel is the resurrection experience, into which it is the purpose of the Evangelist to lead his leaders, and which is the privilege and inspiration of all who are the followers of the first disciples in love and loyalty to Jesus Christ.

[1] This is not to question either the truth of the facts or the authenticity of the words of our Lord recorded in these twelve verses, "this genuine relic of the first generation," as Swete calls them. It is simply a question of evidence and authorship.

2. *The Gospel according to St Matthew*

That in Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfilment of the agelong Messianic expectation of the Jews is a conclusion which has never been accepted by any considerable portion of the Jewish race ; and even to the disciples, the humility of the life and death of Christ meant a complete reconstruction of all their belief about the Messiah. But though the character and career of Jesus could not have been deduced from the Old Testament, a careful re-reading of the Old Testament in the light of what He was revealed Him as the key to the Scriptures, the One who alone could make coherent and complete the partial and many-sided revelation given to the Jewish Church. This aspect of Christ's work as the fulfilment of the old dispensation is one which makes at first little appeal to Gentile Christians, to whom Christ comes first as an immediate and personal deliverer ; but it has its deep significance, and it was fitting and necessary that from the Jewish Church should come forth a Gospel in which Christ should be portrayed as the long-expected King and Redeemer of Israel.

Of the date and of the circumstances of the composition of this Gospel, in some respects the completest which we possess, we can give no exact account. All early tradition asserts its connection with the Apostle Matthew. As there is no assertion of authorship in the book itself, we are driven back on traditions, and, as we have seen, our earliest authority, Papias, says that " Matthew composed the

sayings in the Hebrew tongue, and every one translated them as he was able." It is improbable that these words refer to our present Gospel; the book bears none of the marks of a translation, and many of its quotations are from the Greek Version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint; it is very unlikely that the Gospel as we have it ever existed in Aramaic.[1] But an analysis of the Gospel suggests a possible connection between it and the work of the Matthew the Apostle; we shall find that for the great part of the way, Matthew follows Mark, everything is repeated except one or two minor incidents and one parable; in Luke we find parallels to many sayings and a few incidents; what remains as the special contribution of Matthew may be divided as follows:

I. A few incidents. The majority of these are concerned with the birth of Jesus and are found in the first two chapters; two, Peter's walking on the water (xiv. 28-30), and the coin in the fish's mouth (xvii. 24-7) concern the Apostle Peter.

II. A large number of quotations from the Old Testament; for example, iv. 15-16; viii. 17; xii. 18-21.

III. By far the greatest part of the new material consists of sayings of our Lord; the utterances of our Lord fill nearly three-quarters of the Gospel.

[1] The spoken language of Palestine, which Papias probably meant. Hebrew had been a dead language for centuries, and a Gospel written in that language would have been of less use to the early Jewish disciples than Wyclif's version to a modern English audience.

It is possible that this Gospel incorporates the whole, or the greater part of the collection of sayings made by the Apostle Matthew, and thus is really "according to Matthew" though not actually from his hand. Though the Apostolic authorship must remain a matter of pious opinion and not of certainty, we can define a little more closely the origin of the book; the book in the New Testament which it most resembles is the Epistle of James, it is reasonably certain that it was written by a Jew for the benefit of the Jewish Christian Church in Palestine between thirty-five and forty-five years after the death of Christ.

Before we pass on to Matthew's picture of the Hebrew Christian Messiah, we may pause for a moment to consider the way in which he handles his material. Even a cursory reading will make it clear that Matthew's book is more systematic, more elaborately written than Mark's. In the first place, Matthew is much more sparing of his space; having much to say within the limits of a small book, he is compressed where Mark is diffuse; the healing of the woman with the issue of blood and of the daughter of Jairus is briefly told in nine short verses, where Mark used twenty-three and Luke seventeen (Matt. ix. 18-26, compare Mark v. 21-43; Luke viii. 40-56); the healing of the Gadarene demoniac is told by Matthew in 135, by Mark in 324 words. This economy of space is effected not by the omission of anything essential to the narrative, but by the sacrifice of many of the picturesque details which Mark alone has preserved.

Matthew's Gospel is arranged on a totally different

plan from that of Mark; Mark records events, as far as we can tell, in the chronological order in which they happened, Matthew's order is based on the grouping of events according to subjects. For example, we find in viii. 1-ix. 34 the story of various miracles of Jesus. Nearly all of these are mentioned by Mark, but in different contexts and in a different order. (The references in Mark are as follows: i. 40-5; i. 29-34; iv. 35-41; v. 1-20; ii. 1-12; v. 22-43.) Similarly, in xiii, there is a series of seven parables all dealing with the Kingdom of God. This chapter is typical of Matthew's method of recording the words of our Lord; instead of the brief episode, followed by a short pregnant saying, which is characteristic of Mark's Gospel, we find here more generally long connected discourses; of these there are five[1] in the Gospel—the Sermon on the Mount (v-vii), the Missionary Instructions to the Disciples (x), the Parables of the Kingdom (xiii), the Woes against the Scribes and Pharisees (xxiii), and the discourse "of the Last Things" (xxiv), besides smaller groupings, as of the three sayings about John the Baptist (xi). It is quite possible that these discourses were spoken by our Lord exactly as they were set down by Matthew; but when we find that the same sayings occur in Luke in different contexts, there is a strong probability that the arrangement in this Gospel is due to the reporter and not to the speaker.

The care with which Matthew writes is illustrated

[1] We may note the writer's fondness for the numbers five and seven; there are five great discourses, seven parables of the kingdom (xiii), seven woes (xxiii), a sevenfold arrangement in the genealogy of Christ (i. 1-17).

not only by his general arrangement, but even in the details of sentences. If a saying of Christ is recorded in two forms (and we must remember that almost all, if not all, His sayings were spoken in Aramaic and reach us only through the medium of a translation), Matthew almost always adopts the fuller and more flowing form; we may contrast him with Luke in the version which he gives of the Beatitudes (Matt. v. 3-12; Luke vi. 20-3), and of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi. 9-13; Luke xi. 2-4, R.V.) and with Mark in the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper (Matt. xxvi. 20-9; Mark. xiv. 22-5; note especially the phrase "the forgiveness of sins").

The general effect of this elaboration is to make Matthew's Gospel more sweeping and stately than that of Mark; it has a different rhythm and is a much less difficult book to read aloud. There is a profound impressiveness in the accumulation together of many complementary sayings and doings; the parables of the kingdom foreshadow its growth, its opponents, the individual's response to it, and its final triumph, and direct our thoughts from themselves to the many-sided adequacy of the kingdom's King; the miracles bring before us every aspect of the miraculous powers of Christ; His power over disease, curable and incurable, over the spirit-world, over the forces of nature, over death itself; the various methods of His operation, by a touch, by a word, by a word spoken at a distance; the requirements of His work, faith in the person healed, or faith in his friends. Matthew records less often than Mark or Luke the effects of Christ's

work on those who saw it; with such a presentation, the majesty of Christ so stands out from the narrative that comment would weaken, not heighten the effect.

It is, as we have seen, the purpose of Matthew to depict the majesty of Christ as the long-expected King of Israel, the inheritor of all the promises of the Old Covenant. This intention is carried out in various ways. The genealogy of Christ in the first Chapter is so arranged as to emphasise His descent from Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race, through David and Solomon, the typical kings; the story of the Wise Men from the East shows clearly the royalty of the new-born Infant. But it is principally in his use of the Old Testament that the writer shows his special purpose. Mark quotes from the Old Testament only once, apart from recording quotations made by our Lord Himself. Matthew quotes constantly and from every part of the Old Testament, in illustration of the story he is telling. Sometimes we recognise at once the significance of the citations; the words "He shall not strive nor cry," spoken of the servant of the Lord (Isa. xlii. 2), profoundly illuminate the restraint and unobtrusiveness of the ministry of Jesus; "himself bare our infirmities and carried our sickness" could receive but the faintest fulfilment in any human prototype of the Messiah. But often Matthew discerns connections where we should not have dreamed of looking for them; "and called my son out of Egypt" (Hosea xi. 1), spoken of the deliverance of the children of Israel in the Exodus is connected with the return of the child Jesus from His exile in Egypt; the words of the Psalmist,

"I will open my mouth in parables" (lxxviii. 2), look forward to the parabolic teaching of Christ. Such interpretation can only be explained by the belief that the whole Old Testament is symbolic; the sacrifices of the Law, the rule of the kings as representatives of God, the imagery of prophets, the yearning of Psalmists, all have a deep and hidden significance; Christ is the clear light into which the broken rays of the old revelation are combined.

Since Matthew's purpose is to display the kingship of Christ, it is natural that he should have much to tell us of the kingdom over which Christ rules; and we are accordingly not surprised to find that Matthew's is more than all the others the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The phrase is not uncommon in the other Gospels, but whereas in Mark it occurs fourteen times, in Matthew this, or the more Jewish form of the expression, "the kingdom of heaven," is used nearly fifty times. It is interesting to note that while Mark tells us that Jesus came proclaiming "the good news of God" (i. 14), Matthew twice says that He went about "preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases" (iv. 23; ix. 35). The great series of parables in Chapter xiii. presents the kingdom in action under various aspects; the Sermon on the Mount, with which Matthew opens his account of the teaching of Jesus, expresses it in precept; for the children of Israel the Law of Moses had been sufficient; now for the subjects of the new kingdom is set forth a new Law of liberty, which partly modifies, partly supplements the ordinances of the old Mosaic order.

All the passages which deal with the kingdom should be carefully collected and studied. It is important to notice the way in which, though the kingdom is the kingdom of God, Christ becomes gradually the central figure in it, and how often He associates Himself with the sudden bringing in of the kingdom. As we read, we cannot but become aware that there seem to be two conceptions of the kingdom; is it "the sovereignty of God," existing wherever God's will is obeyed, or is it an organised, visible divine society on earth? Is it a matter of slow growth and development, or of a sudden intervention of God's power in human life? The question is not merely academic, for two widely different views of the world, of God's purpose and of the duty of man are based on the two aspects under which the kingdom is presented.

In this Gospel we find more evidence for the conception of a sudden climax, preceded by a period of growth; the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven (xiii. 31-3; recorded also in Mark) speak only of growth; but in the interpretation of the parable of the tares we read that "the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels . . . the Son of man shall send out his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all offences" (xiii. 39-41); so in the parable of the drag-net, "so shall it be in the end of the age; the angels shall go forth . . . there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (xiii. 49-50). This idea of judgment and a catastrophic bringing in of the kingdom is known as the "apocalyptic element in the Gospels"; Jewish speculation had come to rest in

the hope of a sudden and decisive act of God on behalf of His nation, and attempts have been made to show that such teaching has been foisted by the disciples on to the teaching of our Lord, in which it really has no place. There can be no real doubt that such teaching was given ; it is found in all the Gospels (see Mark xiii. 5-31 ; it is often maintained with no good foundation that large parts of this passage are a " Jewish Apocalypse " of the date of the destruction of the Temple ; which simply means that the critics do not like the passage and wish to be rid of it), indeed, there is hardly a book of the New Testament from which it is wholly absent, but it is in Matthew that it is given the greatest prominence.

In xxiv. 3, the disciples ask the very striking question, " What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age ? " (contrast Mark xiii. 4 ; Luke xxi. 7). It is notable that these two phrases " Parousia," coming, and " the end of the age " do not occur in any other Gospel, whereas each is found several times in Matthew ; " Parousia " at xxiv. 27, 37, 39, and " the end of the age " at xiii. 39, 40, 49 ; xxviii. 20. With the thought of catastrophe is associated that of the judgment ; the words so common in ordinary speech, " the day of judgment," are found in Matthew alone of the Evangelists (xii. 36 ; xi. 20, 24), " it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." As king, Jesus takes to Himself the office of judge ; in the great parable of judgment (xxv. 31), we read that " the Son of man sitting on the throne of His glory will judge all the nations of the earth,

who shall be gathered before Him "—a claim as tremendous as any which our Lord makes in the fourth Gospel; in xvi. 27, "then shall He render unto every man according to his works," He attributes to the Son of Man the function which in Proverbs xxiv. 12, the source of the quotation, had been ascribed to God alone.

It is clear that the idea of a final judgment was closely associated in the mind of our Lord and of His disciples with the expectation of judgment on the Jewish people, which was fulfilled in A.D. 70. It became very early the belief of the Christians that the Jews, having rejected Jesus, had themselves been rejected by God, and that all the Covenant promises had been transferred to the new Israel, the Church. This thought is nowhere definitely expressed by Matthew, but its appropriateness to the Jewish Gospel is obvious, and there are certain passages where this underlying conception comes to the surface. Matthew stresses more than the other Evangelists the consequences for the Jews of their rejection of their king; their punishment is proportionate to their privileges. In this Gospel only we are told that the leaders of the nation called down upon themselves the responsibility for the death of Christ: "His blood be upon us and upon our children" (xxvii. 25). Jesus had already told them that "the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out" (viii. 12), and that "the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it" (xxi. 43); we notice the tremendous solemnity of the close of Chapter xxiii; as Jesus says, "Your house is left unto you

desolate," He leaves the temple (" your house " now, not " my Father's house "), never to return.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Matthew should record sayings which go far beyond the limits of the earthly ministry of the Lord; Christ foretells that " this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world " (xxiv. 14), and bids His disciples " bring all nations into discipleship " (xxviii. 19) In two very important passages He speaks of the Church. It is of no small significance that in the other three Gospels, there is no direct reference to the Church at all, and hardly a reference to its ordinances, and this in books written at a time when the Church was highly organised, with Sacraments as an essential part of its life. It is from Luke alone[1] that we learn that Jesus intended the Last Supper to be repeated as a sacramental meal. Matthew records the direct command to baptize (xxviii. 19), in a passage which is unique not only for this reason, but also because in the words, " In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," it gives far clearer expression than any other passage in the Gospels to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Twice the actual word Church occurs; in xviii. 17, the refractory brother who refuses to listen to the voice of the Church is to be treated as a heathen man and a publican.[2] In xvi. 18, when Peter has confessed his faith in Jesus as the

[1] Among the Evangelists; with this agrees 1 Cor. xi. 24, where the account given of the Last Supper in many respects agrees more closely with Luke than with the other Gospels.

[2] This verse is so frequently misunderstood that it is worth while to interject the question " How did the Lord Himself treat heathen men and publicans? '

Christ, Jesus replies, "Thou art Peter and on this rock I will build My Church." Peter was the first member of the new community, the ἐκκλησία, which Christ was calling out from the world; he was the first to reach that level of faith and spiritual insight which is demanded of those who would be included in the Church, which is the mystical body of Christ. What is the relation of the Church to the Kingdom of God? Matthew gives us no clear guidance. But the word ἐκκλησία, Church, had come to be commonly used of the congregation of Israel (Acts vii. 38), and it seems that our Lord in using the word pointed to the substitution, in the purposes of God, for the elect nation, of the elect people, whom He was choosing for Himself. If this be true, it is not surprising that the Church of the next generation regarded itself as the successor of the old Israel, and the inheritor of all the promises into which the old Israel had not been able to enter because of unbelief.

3. *The Gospel according to Luke*

None of our Gospels contains direct evidence as to its authorship; but in the case of the third, we may feel no reasonable doubt that it is from the hand of Luke the physician, the companion of Paul. This certainty rests on the undeniable connection between the Acts and this Gospel; what little requires to be said on the question of authorship may be conveniently left over to the chapter on the Acts, and the result there set forth be here anticipated. It would be satisfactory to believe that all the Evan-

gelists had themselves been followers of the Lord, and eye-witnesses of the events which they record: from the desire to establish such a belief, Mark has often been identified with the young man "clad only in a sheet" of Mark xiv. 51, and it has been supposed that Luke was either one of the Seventy of Luke x. 1, or the unnamed disciple of the walk to Emmaus (xxiv. 13). For such identifications, there is no foundation except sentiment; and we must be content to regard Luke as one of the second generation of disciples, who knew our Lord by faith only and not by sight.

With this view the character of the Gospel itself accords: Luke approaches his subject not as a writer of reminiscences but as a historian. He makes no profession of personal knowledge, but rather of careful research; his was by no means the first attempt at writing a Gospel, but with both documentary and oral evidence before him, he has used both, and has done his best to make his book a reliable and accurate account of the events which it records (i. 1-4). This Gospel is not merely a life of Christ, it is part of the history of a great movement, the first volume of a history of the beginnings of the Christian Church; for this reason, Luke finds it necessary to go back to the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and he alone makes any attempt to date the events of which he writes in relation to other contemporary happenings; the list of rulers of the period (iii. 1-2), elaborate though it is (reminding us of the similar list given by Thucydides at the beginning of his history of the Peloponnesian war), does not enable

us to fix with exactness the date of our Lord's ministry, the fifteenth year of Tiberius being a much vaguer indication than it appears to be;[1] but we are grateful to Luke for the fact not recorded elsewhere that our Lord was about thirty years old at the time of His appearance in Galilee.

Luke's character as a Greek historian is further borne out not only by his better and more literary Greek, but by the skilful arrangement of his materials, which makes this Gospel the smoothest to read, and from the modern historical standpoint the most satisfactory of the four.[2] In comparison with Mark, we find that he, like Matthew, is concerned to save space (is it irreverent to suggest that the Evangelists were affected by the length of the papyrus roll on which they probably wrote? Luke, the longest of the four, must have strained the capacity of the ordinary roll); but his method is quite different; he follows almost exactly the Marcan order of events; but he makes one large omission and three large additions. The events recorded in Mark vi. 45-viii. 26 are very much like other events recorded earlier, and this passage has therefore nothing to correspond with it in Luke. The first addition is Chapters i.-ii. which contain the story of our Lord's birth, and the happenings which led up to it; this differs in many ways from the similar account given by Matthew, and it is suggested that Matthew

[1] It is very remarkable that we should have no certainty as to any of the dates of our Lord's life; 6 B.C. for His birth and A.D. 29 for the Crucifixion would probably be generally, though not universally, accepted.

[2] The great German historian, Eduard Meyer, in his recent study of the beginnings of Christianity, deserts the now general practice of beginning with Mark, and takes Luke as the basis of his work.

gives Joseph's point of view, whereas Luke's story is derived from Mary the Mother of the Lord. The second addition is the long passage, vi. 20-viii. 3, which comes between Mark iii. 20 and iv. 1 (the events of Mark iii. 21-35 are mentioned by Luke in a different context). The last, between Mark ix. 50 and x. 1 contains the whole of Chapters ix. 51-xviii. 14, and is concerned with the last journey to Jerusalem; into this section Luke has worked a great part of the matter which is peculiar to and nearly all that is most characteristic of his Gospel.

Mark goes back in spirit to the days of which he writes; Matthew looks back and sees in Christ the fulfilment of the Old Covenant; Luke writes with a forward glance—his story is connected implicitly, though nowhere expressly, with the story of the Early Church, to which it is the introduction. There is very little that is characteristically Jewish in it. Perhaps for that reason it is the Gospel which appeals most readily to the Western mind; most people, if asked to write down the first ten sayings or parables of Christ which come into their mind, would write down six or seven, at least, which are recorded by St Luke. Mark may be described as the Gospel of the Servant of the Lord, Matthew as that of the King of Israel; it is not so easy to characterise this Gospel in a single phrase; but it would probably be most true to call it the Gospel of the gentle and compassionate Saviour;[1] it is in the broad sympathy, understanding and tenderness

[1] Notice how rarely this title is used of our Lord in the Gospels, Luke ii. 11, John iv. 42 only.

of the Christ of this Gospel that its appeal is chiefly to be found.

It is sometimes stated that this is the Pauline Gospel, and that Luke in writing it was deeply affected by the ideas of his friend and teacher, Paul; if this were true, we should expect to find here a reflection of the great Pauline doctrines of salvation by faith and of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the purposes of God. It is worth reading the Gospel with this thought in mind, but not much will be found to support it. The truth is that there is very little direct teaching in the Synoptic Gospels about either faith or salvation, and the word "believe," is actually less common in Luke than in the other three; it is true that Luke four times over records the words of the Lord, "Thy faith hath saved thee," or "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (vii. 50; viii. 48; xvii. 19; xviii. 42), but all the Gospels are at one in emphasising faith as the condition of the miracles of Christ. Of the Gentiles, very little is said; Luke traces the genealogy of Christ back to Adam, the universal father, not to Abraham, the father of the Jewish race (iii. 23-38); he records the saying that "they shall come from the east and the west, from the north and from the south" (xiii. 29); Simeon speaks of the infant Christ as "a light to lighten the Gentiles" (ii. 32); but Luke equally records the healing of "a daughter of Abraham whom Satan hath bound eighteen years" (xiii. 16), and emphasises that Zacchæus was a son of Abraham (xix. 9). The balance of emphasis is almost exactly equal in the Jewish Gospel of Matthew. If Luke has been influenced by Paul, it

is only in the temper of his mind, and not to the extent of seriously affecting his presentment of the Gospel ; indeed, the similarity of the Pauline Gospel to Mark and Matthew is one of the strongest arguments against the idea, which some would have us accept, that Paul distorted beyond recognition the original Gospel of Jesus.

The character of the Gospel is given, as we have said, by its broad human interest. This interest is not in individuals ; it is surprising how few persons stand out vividly before us in this narrative ; each individual is thought of only in his relation to Christ ; they are as it were types of humanity, and each calls out some new aspect of the grace and gentleness of the Lord. It is very remarkable how rarely names are given, and how often we have to be content with the vague introduction which gives no hint of time and place : " it came to pass as He was praying in a *certain* place that a *certain* man of His disciples said to Him " (xi. 1) ; " a *certain* woman lifted up her voice and said " (xi. 27) ; " a *certain* man in the crowd said to Him " (xii. 13). It seems as though the individual were being suppressed in order that the whole emphasis may be concentrated on the central Figure and His response to human need.

On the other hand, in the sayings of Christ Himself, we find a deep interest in people, and understanding of their thoughts and motives. This is most clearly seen in the characteristic parables of this Gospel, which are very different from those recorded elsewhere. In Matthew and Mark, the parables are generally comparisons from nature, or from man in his relation to nature—the sower, the

tares, the mustard seed. Some of these are reproduced by Luke, but those which most impress us in this Gospel, the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, are quite different ; they are stories carefully worked out, in which nature hardly appears at all, and the centre of interest is in the thoughts of men and their "interior conversations" (stories such as those of the Wicked Husbandmen and of the Virgins in Matthew approximate more nearly to this type) ; the rich fool says to himself, "I will pull down my barns and will build greater" (xii. 18) ; the prodigal says, "I will arise and go to my father" (xv. 18) ; the dishonest steward reminds himself that he can neither dig nor beg (xvi. 3). These stories, with their emphasis on motive and their penetration of character, are one of the respects in which Luke stands between the other Synoptics and St John ; they serve to remind us of the infinite variety of the teaching of Christ ; they bear upon the surface the mark of their genuineness, for they contain some of the most beautiful sayings of the Lord, and no mind could possibly have thought of them but His.

This interest of the Lord in men, this understanding of their needs, is especially shown in His care for the poor and outcast, particularly, as we have seen, those of the house of Abraham. Whatever the trouble was, it was not beyond the limits of His compassion and His power to help ; the "crooked woman" whom Satan had bound eighteen years was healed of her infirmity, although it was the Sabbath Day (xiii. 16) : Zacchæus, degraded by a mean and sordid calling, was required to entertain

an unexpected Guest, and on that day salvation entered into his house, " for the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost " (xix. 10) ; when a sinful woman bathed His feet with tears and anointed them with precious ointment, He countered the criticism of the Pharisee with the parable of the two debtors, and dismissed her in peace. Naturally such conduct would not meet with the favour of the religious authorities ; His consorting with publicans and sinners, and the indignation it aroused in the minds of the Scribes and Pharisees, are more strongly emphasised in this Gospel than elsewhere.

This affection for the weak and the despised shows itself in two remarkable ways. First, in the fact that the Gospel of Luke is pre-eminently the Gospel of women. The position of women was far better among the Jews than among their Gentile neighbours, in proportion as Gentile moral standards were lower than those prevalent among the Jews ; but it was the coming of Jesus more than anything else which freed women and gave them a position of honour, security and service. This Gospel is full of the story of their association with Him. At the beginning, we find those two noble women, Elisabeth and Mary the mother of the Lord ; after the narratives of the infancy, Mary is kept strictly in the background as though to emphasise the truth that she has no share in the redeeming work of her Son ; but in those tender and moving scenes of the first two chapters, the standard is set for the respectful honour in which she has always been held by the best Christian thought. Then we meet, amongst others,

with Martha and Mary of Bethany, the eternal contrast between the life of action and the life of contemplation (x. 38-41); and Mary of Magdala, out of whom He had cast seven devils, and those other Galilean women who followed Him and ministered to Him of their substance, and at the last were found standing by the Cross (xxiii. 27-31), and the widow of Nain, whose only son He raised from the dead. Women have always recognised in the Lord Jesus the ideal towards which womanhood must strive, and He commanded their love no less than the devotion and service of men. It is worth while to inquire which characteristics of His many-sided and inexhaustible personality have proved so attractive to women, and how it came about that He combined in Himself the qualities which win and hold each of the two sexes, whose aims and ideals are so often in conflict.

At the same time, the teaching of the Lord on poverty and riches is given more clearly here than in the other Gospels. At the beginning of the story of His ministry, we read that He chose as His text in the synagogue at Nazareth the words of Isaiah, "He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor" (iv. 18). In the Beatitudes, where Matthew interprets poverty as poverty of spirit, Luke records the saying directly as "Blessed are ye poor" (vi. 20), and adds, "Woe unto you rich, for ye have your consolation" (vi. 24). The Lord speaks emphatically of the duty of using riches for the benefit of the poor "and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee" (xiv. 14), and the same lesson is taught in the parable of the Unjust Steward

(xvi. 1-12).[1] The point of two of the parables, that of the Rich Fool, and that of the Rich Man and Lazarus (xii. 13-21; xvi. 19-31), is to make clear the perils to which the rich are exposed; in neither of these cases would it be true to say that the rich man is condemned merely because he is rich, but tremendous emphasis is laid on the perils of selfishness and self-regard, which beset the rich far more than the poor. The most deadly sin is pride, whether of place (xiv. 7), or of religious esteem (xviii. 9-14); the humility of the publican is set above the self-righteousness of the Pharisee.

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, through its picturesque language, sounds the note of urgency and of the vital character of choice in this life which is highly characteristic of this Gospel. We remember the pictures of the man preparing to build a tower, and of the king going forth to war; and the searching recommendation to count the cost is concluded with the warning, "So therefore not one of you that renounceth not all that he hath can be My disciple" (xiv. 28-33). Appearance counts for nothing; hard words are said of him who lays up treasure for himself, but is not rich towards God (xii. 21); that which is exalted in the sight of men is abomination to God (xvi. 15). The whole matter is summed up in the solemn saying, "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" (ix. 62).

It will have been noticed that in the section on

[1] There are many interpretations of this most difficult parable; but surely "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" can refer to nothing but the judicious expenditure of worldly wealth with a view to laying up heavenly treasure.

Mark, the simple name " Jesus " has been generally employed, whereas in this section the name has often been replaced by the title " the Lord " ; this is not a matter of individual caprice, but follows the usage of the Gospels themselves. The titles applied to Christ are of great importance throughout the New Testament, and should be carefully studied. This may be a convenient place in which to append certain suggestions which are specially relevant to this Gospel, but should be borne in mind throughout the Gospels. The titles should be studied under the following headings :

I. Titles which are used in speaking of Jesus by the Evangelist in his narrative.
II. Titles which are used by characters in the Gospels in speaking to Jesus, or about Him.
III. Titles which are used by the Lord in speaking of Himself.

I. It will be found that Mark very commonly writes simply " Jesus," but that he sometimes uses no proper name in quite a long stretch of narrative ; and refers to Him simply as " He." Matthew almost invariably writes " Jesus," Luke not uncommonly " the Lord," a title which in Matthew and Mark always refers to God ; in this Luke follows the practice of the Gentile Church, which, probably under the influence of public worship, had come commonly to speak of Jesus as the Lord. The combined title Jesus Christ is used only once ; if the passage in question (Matt. xvi. 21) be considered in relation to its context, the significance of its use there will become immediately apparent.

II. From the titles by which Jesus is addressed, we can infer the level of spiritual insight of those who speak, and the gradual stages by which those who heard Him reached a true understanding of His divine nature and office. The word κύριος, Lord, is very uncommon in Mark, and the cases in which it occurs correspondingly important (vii. 28, etc.); in Matthew and Luke it is much more common, but the force of it, as in the fourth Gospel, seems to be very much reduced, and to be nearly equivalent to our "Sir"; for example, in John xx. 15, Mary addresses the "gardener" as κύριε. The disciples ordinarily address Him as διδάσκαλε, teacher, for which Luke sometimes substitutes ἐπιστάτα, master; and this expresses the relationship which for some time they believed to exist between themselves and the Lord. Occasionally He is addressed as "Son of David," with clear reference to His Messianic claims.

III. In referring to Himself, He nearly always uses the phrase "Son of Man," which is used by no one else in speaking of Him. All the instances of this phrase, which is common in all the Gospels, but less so in the fourth Gospel than in the other three, should be carefully collected and compared. The phrase in Aramaic appears to mean no more than "Man"; but from its origin in Daniel vii. 13, and its usage in non-canonical books like the book of Enoch, it seems clear that by the time of our Lord it had acquired a Messianic meaning, and His application of it to Himself implied, to the mind of the discerning, a claim to Messianic dignity. It

will be found that the instances of its use may be clearly divided, according as they refer to present humiliation, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head," or to future glory, "Ye shall see the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven." Perhaps the underlying idea of the phrase is that of representative manhood; all men are "sons of men," but He is "the Son of Man," Man *par excellence*. It is necessary that this should be true both of the suffering humanity in which He was made like in all things to His brethren, and of the glorified humanity, according to which He is now our representative in heaven and shall come to be our judge; there is no other guarantee of the reality and continuity of Christian experience.

4. *The Gospel according to John*

In the year A.D. 70, after one of the most terrible sieges of recorded history, Jerusalem was captured by the Romans, and the whole world was shaken by its fall. The same year may be taken as the great turning-point in the history of the Early Church; it marks roughly the close of the Apostolic age. By this time, the majority of the original Apostles and those who had known Christ in the flesh had died, and the leadership had passed to their successors; through the destruction of the home base, the Church was compelled to strip off its last vestiges of Judaism; the Jewish Christian Church did, indeed, maintain a precarious existence east of the Jordan, to die away in the middle of the fourth century in obscure and heretical sects; but from henceforth

the Church must stand forth as a Catholic Church, with no ideal less than the conquest of the whole world. The Pauline period of conflict had marked out for all time the clear limits of Christian doctrine and the basis of Christian organisation, and in the next generation the Church was to prove its stability, and its capacity for extending itself in the most varied directions. At the same time, the character of the opposition to the Church was growing more clearly defined; the Roman Empire entered the lists as an enemy not now through caprice of a tyrant but in proper legal form; the Church was compelled by its very nature to challenge all the religions of the world, and particularly the emotional, and generally immoral, mystery cults of the Eastern Roman Empire;[1] the Jews were as always among the adversaries, and began an agelong controversy, conducted with ever-increasing acrimony, till the predominance of the Church was finally established. Enemies were within as well as without; the happy imagination which depicts the first century of the Church in glowing colours is sadly wide of the mark; very soon after the death of Christ false teachers began to make their appearance, and before the end of the century had established themselves as the sect of the Docetæ; they maintained that the life of Christ on earth had been no reality but a mere appearance. Many considerations tended to centre attention on the person of Christ; the Church had not to add new doctrines, but to draw out the full

[1] That the growing Church was deeply influenced by these mystery religions seems to me on the evidence unproven and *a priori* improbable in the extreme.

implications of doctrines which had stood the test of the great period of expansion ; men could not but inquire after the real, the eternal significance of Him who was now no more a teacher of Galilee, but the adored and glorified Head of an almost world-wide Church. What the Church needed was a reconsideration of the life and death of Christ in the light of sixty years' experience of the risen Christ, and that need was sufficiently supplied to it in the writing of the fourth Gospel.

Somewhere about the end of the first century, almost unnoticed, from the Christian community at Ephesus this incomparable book made its way into the world. For some time it was hardly known or quoted outside the circle of believers in Asia Minor, but gradually it made its way in the rest of the Church, and well within a century this Gospel was universally known and recognised, and accepted as the work of the Apostle John. The first impression left on the mind by a rapid reading of the book is that of the extraordinary beauty and tenderness of its narratives. It is only a perverse criticism which can accuse the story of artificiality, and represent the Jesus of this Gospel as cold and aloof from the world of ordinary men ; the uncritical reader carries away a series of pictures of inexpressible beauty—Jesus sitting by the well of Sychar, wearied with His journey, Jesus weeping at the tomb of Lazarus,[1] Jesus washing His disciples' feet, Jesus standing in

[1] Many theologians now tell us that Jesus wept with anger at the spiritual obtuseness of the Jews standing by. There is no answer to such criticism ; the critic may know theology, but he does not know the Lord of all theology.

the dim light of morning on the shore of the sea of Tiberias.

A more careful reading reveals the real and inexhaustible profundity of what Clement of Alexandria called the " spiritual Gospel." It is easy to miss this real character of the book, because it is written in such simple language ; we read that " the life was the light of men," and because the words are familiar we pass on to the next sentence, giving only a casual thought to their profound significance. The Gospel is a work of the deepest thought, and, if it is to be understood, it naturally demands the deepest thought which we can give. It is the Gospel of Christian experience ; the other three are for all who read them : this is for those only who have accepted the Lordship of Jesus. The writer assumes familiarity with the Synoptic record, his purpose is to speak not of natural happenings but of the eternal background and connections of those happenings ; the whole Gospel moves, in the great phrase of Spinoza, *sub specie æternitatis*, under the form of eternity. The book is not really a life of Christ but a meditation on the person of Christ, and on other things seen only as in their relation to Him. It is clearly the work of one whose conflict had been not outward but inward, whose experience of Christ had been not expansive but intensive ; the storminess of Paul's career has been succeeded by the calm and settled tranquillity of an assured and perfect faith ; in long years of silent pondering, the writer has taken up into his thought all the great elements of Christian thought and experience, and at last in this book he allows the reader to share his deepest

understanding of the mystery of Christ; shorn of all superficiality and clothed in the outward garb of the days of His flesh.

This origin of the book shows itself in the peculiar method and style of the author. His method is to begin telling a story, and then gradually to weave round it the thoughts suggested by his communing with the Spirit of God. The earlier Evangelists generally tell their story without comment; here the author continually comments; the longest and most impressive example is in xii. 37-43, where he turns aside from narrative to mark the central division of his book by a solemn summing-up of the failure of the ministry of Jesus and of the condemnation of the Jews. But the same method is followed throughout; in Chapter iii. we are told of the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus by night and of the testimony of John the Baptist; gradually the original characters become less and less distinct; by the time we reach the end of each story, we are clear that it is the voice of the Evangelist which speaks, and not that of Jesus or of John the Baptist; but there is no break; utterance has gradually changed into comment, narrative into meditation, and we are led into the region where the author's mind most happily dwells, that of the manifestation of the eternal Father in the Son.

The style of the Gospel is marked, as already said, by an extraordinary simplicity. By two means only does the writer seek to attract attention. First by the constant use of characteristic words; these themselves are of the simplest—light, life, love,

truth;[1] but their meaning has not been worn down by conventional usage: each word must be given its full significance in the light of the great matters which it is intended to express. Secondly, by the repetition of phrases within a narrative; this gives at first the appearance of monotony; but each narrative, discourse and comment is like a fugue; they cannot be understood without minute attention to subject, counter-subject and the various modifications which they undergo in the building up of the whole. External study throws less light on the fourth Gospel than on any other book in the New Testament. Every sentence bears the impress of the author's mind, and he can best be understood by careful comparison of one passage with another within the Gospel itself.

The purpose of the Gospel is clearly expressed in xx. 31: "these things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name." The aim of the author is not biographical but apologetic; the real line of advance for the Church was not in disregarding difficulties or in abstract speculation, but in a return, with the illumination of experience, to the consideration of the life of Christ. The particular aim of the writer determines the three dominating ideas round which His Gospel is constructed.

I. The first of these is the glory of Christ as the eternal Son. Mark begins his story of the life of

[1] In addition to these great words, the reader will do well to trace through the Gospel the words—word, know, sin, behold, believe, witness, sign.

Christ with His baptism, Matthew with His birth, Luke with the birth of John the Baptist; the fourth Evangelist goes back as far as the book of Genesis, and begins, "in the beginning." The prologue (i. 1-18) is immensely important, and much ink has been spilt about it; even if we follow the right line and interpret it in the light of the rest of the Gospel, we are left with the difficulty that "the word, the λόγος" is unique in the Gospel as a title of Christ. The Old Testament, Greek thought, later Jewish speculation and Christian experience all contribute their share to the meaning of the phrase, but of these components the first and last only are important. In the beginning, so the writer argues, was "God revealing Himself" (thus we may roughly paraphrase the word λογος); He is the power behind creation, the upholder of all things that have life, the source and object of the higher power in man (1-5); from the beginning of time, He was constantly entering into the world and demanding the allegiance of men (9); the world failed to recognise its Creator (10), so He chose a special nation and came to them—and even they for the most part rejected Him (11); however, in that old order of things, there were some, the saints of the Old Testament, who received Him, and to them He gave a new life, by which they were constituted children of God (12-13); finally, when the preparation of the world was complete, God came into the world in a wholly new way, and "God self-revealing" became God self-revealed in the glorious manhood of Jesus; "the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory" (14);

by Jesus came grace (power to fulfil the divine law), and truth (the reality of which the ancient law of Moses had been but a shadow); it is the Church's last word in the great process, of which the New Testament is the record, the process by which the Church came fully to understand the nature and person of the Son of God.

It is only in these introductory verses, which perhaps were written last, that the full meaning of the Gospel is brought out; but it underlies the whole of the remaining chapters. What else can be the meaning of the claims of Christ: "I and My Father are one. Before Abraham was I am"? (x. 30; viii. 58). To the mind of the writer, each lightest word or deed of the Master is important, not only because of what it is in itself, but because of the eternity of which it is the expression in time. The miraculous element is less emphasised than it is, for example, in Mark,[1] but it is treated in a new and significant way; the miracles are no longer mighty works (*δυνάμεις*, power), as they are in Mark, momentary exercises of authority called out by circumstances; to this writer they are signs, *σημεῖα*, mysterious indications of the nature and dignity of the One who wrought them.[2] Symbol sometimes takes the place of narration; there is in the Gospel no account of the institution of the Holy Communion; we have instead a long discourse

[1] This remark contradicts all the books on the fourth Gospel which I have read. The only way for the reader to set his mind at rest is to make it up for himself by reading the two Gospels straight through consecutively.

[2] For an interesting discussion, see Westcott: *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, Chap. V. Note C.

(vi. 26-58), in which the meaning of the great symbolic act is shown. When our Lord says, "Destroy this temple," the writer tells us that He spoke of the temple of His body; but surely there is the thought not only of the resurrection of Christ, but of the passing of the Temple and the arising of the mystical body of Christ, the Church (ii. 19).

II. This is the Gospel of Judgment. In the Synoptic accounts judgment is generally thought of as the judgment of the last day; this idea is not discarded in the fourth Gospel, but the writer lays far more stress on the thought expressed in the saying, "came not to bring peace but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). Jesus, then as now, is the touchstone; men are divided about Him, and by their attitude to Him they are justified or condemned. It is true that Christ says in this Gospel, "I judge no man" (viii. 15), and again, "I came not to judge the world but to save the world" (xii. 47); but He also tells us that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (v. 22), and "he that rejecteth Me hath one that judgeth him; the word that I spake shall judge him" (xii. 48). The terrible thing is that the judgment has begun already, is fulfilling itself all the time as men are about their daily work; indeed, in a sense men are themselves their own judges. If Mark's Gospel is a drama, the fourth Gospel is a tragedy. In Chapters v.-xii. there is unfolded before us the tragedy of unbelief, deepening from stage to stage; the enemies are grouped together as "the Jews" (when

the book was written, the old parties had been broken up and there was no longer any need to distinguish them) ; beginning with incredulity, they go on to resentment and hatred, and the climax of the tragedy is the rejection of Jesus by the leaders of the nation.

III. This is the Gospel of the Spirit. There is a deep significance in the repeated words, " Peace be unto you " in xx. 19, 21 ; the first looks back to the past, the second looks forward to the future, and is joined with the command, " Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Every one believes in two worlds ; but to most people, they are " this world and the next " ; Paul and John both teach us that they are the world of the flesh and the world of the Spirit, and that it is possible and necessary to live in the world of the Spirit while still bound by the body. A man must be born again of the Spirit before he can see the Kingdom of God (iii. 1-9) ; the man who believes on the Son of God has, not shall have, eternal life (iii. 36) ; it is no mere future privilege, but present enjoyment ; it is the union of the spirit of man with God. This is the mystery of the manifestation of God to the believer and not to the world (xiv. 22-4). This union is sometimes spoken of as union with Christ (xv. 1-6), sometimes as the fellowship of the Spirit, the Comforter of the faithful after the return of Jesus to His Father. The teaching of Chapters xiv.-xvi. about the Spirit in His manifold work as teacher, guide and revealer, contains the heart of this Gospel ; the words were spoken by Christ, but it was out of the experience

of life that the writer was impelled by that same Spirit to record them.

If the lines of thought so far suggested have been carefully followed out, it will have become apparent that this Gospel differs in very many respects from the other three. These differences[1] concern the picture which is given of our Lord, both in relation to His acts, His speeches, and the view which is taken of His person.

The fourth Gospel coincides very little with the events of the other three; what they tell it mainly omits, and it tells many things which they do not record. The most outstanding difference is that in this Gospel the scene of a great part of our Lord's ministry is not Galilee but Jerusalem. In the Synoptic narratives, there is no suggestion that the ministry of our Lord lasted more than a few months, and hardly an indication that He had visited Jerusalem before the Passover week in which He met His death. Here, the mention of Jewish feasts at intervals implies that the ministry lasted at least three years. We learn that Jesus had conducted a public campaign in Judea before He appeared in Galilee as the successor of John the Baptist, and that he had visited Jerusalem on several occasions before the last. Corresponding to this difference, we find ourselves in the presence of many characters unknown to us from the Synoptic record. Some of these, like the blind man at Jerusalem and the woman of Samaria, are unnamed; conspicuous

[1] The defence of the fourth Gospel is not helped by failing fully to recognise these differences. The unity of the fourth Gospel with the other three is not that of uniformity, but a larger unity controlling and contributed to by diversity.

among those whose names are given are Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night (iii. 1-17), Nathanael, the Israelite in whom was no guile (i. 47), and Lazarus the brother of Martha and Mary (xi.)—the name is familiar to us as that of the one named character in the parables of Christ (Luke xvi. 20).

Two other matters of some importance may be mentioned. The Church has always commemorated the death of Christ on a Friday, and for this the Synoptic Gospels, with their apparent identification of the Last Supper with the Passover meal, seem to give good authority. It is clear from careful reading of the fourth Gospel that the Last Supper and the Crucifixion both took place before the Passover began, and that the day of the Crucifixion was therefore Thursday. It may not lightly be assumed that there is any contradiction in the records; in favour of Thursday, it may be remembered that our Lord had Himself said that He would be three days and three nights in the tomb (Matt. xii. 40, a passage too readily explained away by many); and there is a deep fitness in the thought that, at the very hour when the Paschal lambs were being slain in the Temple, the Lamb of God was dying for the sins of the world. Secondly, there is a striking difference in the Resurrection narratives; in all the other Gospels, the appearances of Jesus all take place in or near Jerusalem; here we have the record of an appearance by the sea of Galilee (xxi. 1-23); we are reminded that He had Himself foretold that He would go before His disciples into Galilee.

The differences in the speeches of our Lord must

next engage our attention ; the difference extends to form and subject-matter. Instead of the brief saying at the close of an incident, or the collection of sayings which make up the discourses in Matthew, we find here either reasoned argument (iv. 7-26), or a long monologue (*e.g.*, xiv.-xvi.), where the likeness of the speeches to the narrative reminds us that these words, though truly words of our Lord, are dependent on the Evangelist for the form in which we have them. The parables have disappeared ; instead of " the kingdom of heaven is like unto," we find " I am the door of the sheep," " I am the way, the truth and the life," " I am the light of the world," and so on. The emphatic ἐγώ, I, is a marked feature of the Gospel ; whatever the beginning of a story, it nearly always veers round to the person of Jesus and His claims. " They said to Him we have one Father, even God. Jesus said to them, if God were your Father, ye would have loved Me, for I came forth and am come from God " (viii. 41-2 ; cf. iii. 12-13 ; iv. 26 ; v. 24, 47, etc.).

But the greatest difference of all is that of atmosphere. In the earlier Gospels, it seemed as though Christ were almost at pains to hide His divine nature and office ; the disciples have to be trained to recognise it. In this Gospel, the disciples from the first realise that He is more than man (i. 45) ; He openly claims, if not deity, something very closely allied to it (viii. 58 ; x. 30) ; the offence of the Jews is not so much self-righteousness and intolerance, as that they fail to realise who Christ is ; " ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life " (v. 40). He seems in this Gospel to have a repose and dignity

which is in contrast with the other Gospels, where no attempt is made to hide the weakness and weariness of His crowded human life, and His shrinking before the final ordeal of Gethsemane and Calvary. Here He seems to move without a shadow of hesitation towards a divinely appointed goal (notice the frequency of the phrase " Mine hour," " His hour "). It is instructive to compare the two accounts of Gethsemane (Mark xiv. 32-52 ; John xviii. 1-11), carefully noting what is recorded and what is omitted in each.

Of the many questions suggested by a study of the fourth Gospel, one only is crucial—" Is it true ? " historically, as well as spiritually and imaginatively true. Through seventeen centuries, so long, that is, as the Gospel was believed to be without question the work of John the Apostle, this was perhaps the favourite Gospel of the Church ; when the rise of the historical method drew Mark from its comparative obscurity into the centre of the picture, the differences between the two accounts were carefully studied, and generally used to discredit the fourth Gospel. For fifty years, the ordinary critical view was that the Gospel was an imaginative work of the second century, very valuable as evidence for what the Church of that time believed, but written by one who had no independent knowledge of the life of Christ, and therefore of no value as an historical authority. The pendulum has gradually been swinging back to a more conservative position, but the " Johannine problem " still continues to perplex the world of scholarship. To complete our estimate of the Gospel, we must pay some slight

attention to the evidence for its origin and authorship, and to certain considerations involved in the Gospel as a whole.

The external evidence for the Gospel is good as far as it goes. Very soon after its appearance it began to be quoted as by the Apostle John, and the place of its origin is definitely fixed as Asia Minor; the appearance of such a book presupposes the presence in the Church of Asia Minor of a great teacher. From another angle, a tradition, well supported but not unmixed with legendary elements, tells us that after the beginning of the Jewish troubles in A.D. 66 some of the Palestinian Christians, including John the Apostle and Philip the Evangelist, migrated to Ephesus. John lived to a very great age as Bishop of that Church. We are told that when he was too weak to do anything else, he was carried down to Church Sunday by Sunday and delivered as his complete and only message, "little children, love one another."[1] The evidence is complicated by the existence in the Church of Ephesus of one John the Elder, distinct from the Apostle, whom some suppose to have written the Gospel. But we may say that external evidence is strong enough to give probability to a Johannine origin for the Gospel; whether it was written down, not by the teacher, but by those who were taught is another matter; the important point is the connection of the Gospel through an Apostolic channel with the Lord Himself. It is often maintained that this Gospel could not have been written by a fisherman of Galilee; the only

[1] For this beautiful and convincing story we are indebted to Saint Jerome.

answer is that we are not in a position to say what might or might not have been written by one who was chosen by our Lord for his spiritual insight, lived in special intimacy with Him throughout His ministry, was for many years among the leaders of the Jerusalem Church, and finally lived for thirty years in a centre of Greek life and thought.

Internal evidence points in the same direction. It is not possible to identify the author from the book itself; a note to the book, appended as it might seem, by those who published it (xxi. 24, "*we* know that his witness is true"), tells us that the author was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who is mentioned several times in the book, and always as the disciple who best understands the mind and purpose of the Lord. But this disciple is nowhere named, and there is no direct proof for the ordinary assumption that he was John the son of Zebedee. Indeed, from the way in which the sons of Zebedee are referred to in the third person (xxi. 2) it might be supposed that neither of them was the author of the Gospel. Three things, however, do stand out clearly from the book, that the author was a Jew, familiar with Jewish customs and feasts (ii. 6; x. 22), and to some extent with the geography of Palestine (iii. 23; iv. 5); and that he claims to have been an eye-witness of the events which he records (xix. 35).

This is one of those unfortunate cases in which the evidence is not conclusive and the decision really depends upon personal feeling. Those who are sure on other grounds that Jesus cannot have been such as He is represented in this Gospel, unanimously decide in favour of a late date and an unapostolic

origin ; those who believe in the Christ of the fourth Gospel and find that "the Gospel of experience" answers in every detail to "experience of the Gospel," take the other view, and hold that the Gospel is Johannine, if not from the pen of the Apostle himself.

In the defence of the conservative position several considerations may be urged.

I. That the first three Gospels exhausted all the material for writing the life of Jesus which was available in the generation after His death, is a wholly untenable hypothesis. In the passages where St John's story runs parallel with that of the Synoptic Gospels, he shows signs of going back to a historical tradition independent of them ; for example, the Synoptics record the withdrawal of Jesus after the feeding of the 5000 without giving a reason for it ; John supplies the reason—the multitudes came and wished to make him king (vi. 14-15). It is very striking that no mention should be made in the first three Gospels of the raising of Lazarus ; but clearly that event is needed as a link in the chain which led to the final exasperation of the Jews and their determination to make away with Jesus. Nothing is on the face of it more probable than the Jerusalem visits ; His family were in the habit of going up for the Passover (Luke ii. 41) ; He had Himself gone far from His home to seek the baptism of John, and He must have known that sooner or later the attempt on the capital must be made. Unless we suppose some such visits to have taken place, it is hard to explain

the presence of Scribes from Jerusalem so soon in the Galilean ministry (Mark iii. 22), and impossible to account for the rapid spread of the Christian Church after the day of Pentecost. John fully recognises the Galilean ministry, and the difference of audience would largely account for the difference of style in preaching and arguing.

II. In many places this Gospel seems to make explicit and fulfil what can be found later in the other Gospels. For example, the transfiguration may be held to take the place in the Synoptic Gospels of that serenity and security which characterise the figure of Christ in the fourth Gospel. In many Synoptic sayings, from the moment at which He said to the paralytic "Thy sins be forgiven thee," He was openly claiming an authority which belongs to God alone. A saying like that in Matt. xi. 27, "All things are committed unto Me by My Father . . . and no man knoweth the Father but the Son," comes very near to the discourses of the fourth Gospel. We may easily suppose that there was a deeper strain in our Lord's teaching to which the mind of one disciple alone responded, and the full significance of which only became apparent in the whole experience of a lifetime.

III. It may be asked whether the fourth Gospel does not represent an inevitable development. The Church very soon came to pay Jesus divine honours, as it more and more came to realise His heavenly authority and glory. There was a danger that the Jesus of history should become completely

separated from the Christ of worship and experience. To hold fact and idea together, it was necessary that the human life of Jesus should be written in terms of the eternal Sonship, and that the glorified Lord should be shown still to retain in very truth His manhood. If the fourth Gospel had not been written, something would have been written to take its place, or the Catholic faith of the Church in the Son of God would have broken down. After all, in the final issue, experience must decide ; in all ages, the saints of God have turned to this Gospel for the deepest teaching, and the confirmation of their deepest experience. To those who worship such a Christ as this Gospel portrays, who have sounded most deeply its unfathomable truths and staked most upon its promises, it is not hard to say, " In the days of His flesh, He must have been something like this." We may begin, with the disciples, in the Synoptic experience : to stop short of the fourth Gospel is to leave our faith and knowledge imperfect.

V

THE TEACHING OF JESUS

In the providence of God, the full revelation of His nature and purpose was made not in a body of doctrine but in a life. A verbal revelation would have been much simpler; its exact meaning and the limits of its demands could be established by reason; the Jew could find in the provisions of the law of Moses an exactly defined and comfortable salvation. A personal revelation is based on the conception of personal relationships; each man must draw from it as much as is allowed him by his own character and responsiveness; its demands are unlimited. This method of revelation has the drawback that it opens the door to the play of human fancy as well as of human will and emotion; the majority of people believe in or reject a Christ of their own imagination, who bears little relation to the historic Figure revealed in the Gospels. The only corrective to this tendency is regular, exact and impartial study of the text of all the four Gospels. Anything which exists in three dimensions cannot be properly drawn from less than four aspects; great loss is suffered by using less than the complete four Gospels, or by making any attempt to combine them into one; Tatian's *Diatessaron*, the first attempt to write a continuous life of Christ from the

Gospels, is a poor scissors-and-paste affair, and no modern Harmonisation can be a substitute for the great originals.

But even when the Gospels are studied in this way, the individual personality asserts itself and tends to read into the Gospels what is really in the mind of the reader. In the third century, the Church, under the influence of Greek philosophy, began to lose sight of the real Christ behind an imaginary figure who was half philosopher, half pagan hero; and the Gospels were interpreted accordingly. The doctrine of the humanity of Christ was never fully recovered till the nineteenth century: now the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction, and a great school of German teachers and their followers in England wish to represent Christ simply as the greatest of human teachers. This view cannot be maintained without a substantial rewriting of the Gospels, which, like the rest of the New Testament, present Christianity as a religion of redemption, not merely of conduct. But the sayings of Christ are a most important aspect of His life, and that aspect under which it is easiest to connect the four Gospels together; they make the severest demands upon thought, and are the surest guides to action. This book, therefore, would not be complete without a very short chapter on the study of the Teaching of Jesus.

First, a general caution must be entered, which is applicable to all New Testament study, but particularly to this part of it. Most of the books on the teaching of Jesus ought never to have been written, because they do for the student exactly what he ought

to be doing for himself ; a study is of value only as it is our study, and not the slavish following of any teacher however excellent ; the most we should take from a teacher is knowledge which would not otherwise be accessible to us and suggestions as to how our study may be made systematic and complete.

In the second place, it must be remembered that, while many of the sayings of Jesus are not easy to understand, simply because of their depth and the width of their application, it is easy to import into this study two difficulties which do not really belong to it. One is caused by forgetting that our Lord lived in an Eastern country, and His sayings retained all the vividness of Oriental speech. Very few people have any capacity for what is called abstract thought, and it was part of the fitness and condescension of the ministry of Jesus that so much of His teaching should have been given in picture-language. The purpose of a picture is that it should convey a single idea as clearly as possible. The pictures given by Jesus are sometimes converged in a single word, as that of the diligent Pharisee straining at the offensive gnat, and swallowing the whole unwieldy camel (Matt. xxiii. 24). Sometimes they are given more elaborately in what we call parables—the Tares, the Sower, Prodigal Son, and so on. One or two of these parables Jesus interpreted Himself, showing His followers how to grasp the essential features of the story and their contribution to the whole ; but more often He left the interpretation to His followers. When this is the case, we must beware of interpreting literally what is meant to be picturesque, and of lending a mysterious significance to details

which were added only in order to make the picture live; in the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 1-16), there is no special point in the fact that the wage given was a *denarius* a day, except that that was in those times fair wages for a day's honest work.

The second difficulty is caused by making of universal application words of Christ which were spoken to meet an individual need: the words of Christ always cover a universal principle, but the express command is often individual; for instance, the teaching of our Lord is clear throughout on the subject of the perils of riches and the duties of the rich, but the command to sell all and give to the poor was spoken only to the young man whose soul was being strangled by his wealth (Luke xviii. 22).

Two considerations must be borne in mind with a scrupulous conscience, that our study must be complete, and that it must be systematic.

I. It is far easier to square the teaching of our Lord to a theory than to form our theories only out of His teaching which we actually possess; nothing is easier than to stress one part of His words at the expense of another, and consequently to distort His teaching and destroy its balance. To do this is manifestly unfair, since we possess, even among the recorded sayings of Christ, some which on a first reading are directly contradictory; He who said, "he that is not against us is on our part" (Mark ix. 40), said also, "he that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Matt. xii. 30). All the Gospels make it

clear that Christ made it easy for all to come to Him, and it is this side of His words which is emphasised in Christian preaching: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28); "him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37); but it is important to remember the complementary saying, "How hard a thing it is to enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mark x. 24, R.V. margin). A one-sided presentation can only be avoided by becoming thoroughly acquainted with all the sayings of Christ which have been preserved.

II. The sayings of Christ are preserved incidentally in the records of His life; but one of the most striking proofs of the inspiration of the different Gospels is the way in which they combine to give fulness and completeness to the teaching of Christ. To the study of the sayings in their contexts must be added the grouping of kindred sayings from the four Gospels. Various lines of work may be suggested. For example, it is instructive to collect and classify the parables, which are perhaps the most characteristic part of our Lord's teaching; these may be divided according as they deal with man in his relation to nature, to himself, to his neighbour, to God; and many other instructive plans of arrangement will suggest themselves to the student. Others will prefer to follow the social teaching of our Lord—on the duties of a man as a member of the family and of the state, of neighbours, of citizens in war and peace, of the responsibilities of the rich towards the poor and so on. Three

lines may be suggested as being perhaps particularly useful.

III. The teaching of Jesus about God. It is generally agreed that His teaching revolutionised men's idea about God; the first question to be answered is that which concerns His attitude to the revelation of the Old Testament; did He accept the Old Testament picture of God as valid, and merely amplify it, or did He reject it and substitute for it the teaching of the Gospels? The most characteristic title ascribed to God by Jesus is Father—"My Father," "Your Father which is in Heaven"; we should examine carefully into the meaning of these words. The earliest Christian teaching, which was based on the teaching of Christ, is summed up in the first Epistle of John in the words "God is love." This is a doctrine which many in the modern world find it extremely hard to accept, and we are driven back to the Gospels to discover the attitude of Jesus to all in life that seems to deny the almightiness or the love of God—pain, disease, the cruelty of nature, death. We shall further ask whether in the teaching of Jesus love is inconsistent with severity and punishment.

IV. The teaching of Jesus about Himself. The claims made by the Christian Church on behalf of Christ must obviously, if they are true, be based on the claims which He made openly or implicitly for Himself. It is often asserted that Christ never claimed for Himself Deity, or claimed to be the Son of God in any way other than that in which all men

are the sons of God. It is true that He never says in so many words, " I am God " ; had He done so, He would have gone far to justify His family in their opinion that He was insane. But it is important to notice the extent and method of His claims, as the material out of which grew the Church's clear conviction as to the Deity of its Lord. We shall find that He claims absolute authority as a teacher (even as against the authority of Moses the man of God, He reiterates again and again, " but I say unto you ") ; that He claimed absolute obedience on the part of His followers, even to severing of all the ties of ordinary life ; that He claimed a unique understanding of the mind and will of God, and a unique relationship to God. He accepted the worship of men and the title Son of God, or even God, when it was offered Him.

V. The teaching of Jesus about the kingdom of God. It will be found that this will cover the greater part of what is not included under the other two heads. We should group the passages according as they show the conditions of entrance into the kingdom : its universality, the character which is demanded of the citizens of the kingdom, the slowness of its growth contrasted with the suddenness of its consummation. There are one or two difficult questions which must be frankly faced : in the light of such a saying as " when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith upon the earth ? " we must ask ourselves whether the kingdom of God ever does come upon earth ; whether it is purely spiritual (" the kingdom of God is within you "), or whether it

has an outward manifestation in society: we must ask when the kingdom of God came with power (Mark ix. 1; contrast Matt. xvi. 28; Luke ix. 27).

But in all this study, we must bear in mind the words of our Lord: "If any man will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or no." It is impossible to adopt a detached attitude in face of the teaching of Christ[1]; a man is judged by his attitude towards it, and the heaviest judgment of all is reserved for those who, while recognising the precepts as the landmarks of a divine way, fail to walk in the way which they mark out. The deeper the understanding of the teaching of Christ, the stronger the obligation to put it into practice in everyday life; and conversely every advance in Christian living prepares us to enter more fully into the meaning and spirit of the teaching of Christ.

[1] Readers of Dante will remember the magnificent scorn of *Inferno*, Canto III, and the overwhelming line "A Dio spiacenti ed ai nemici suoi."

VI

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

For some reasons, the Acts ought to be the beginning of all New Testament study ; not that it was either the first book to be written or that it records the earliest events, but because it gives the atmosphere in which the other books were written. It was a time of boundless hope and confidence, during which the religion of Jesus was winning its first triumphs in the world. The Church had not yet been enfeebled by compromise with the world ; it had not yet been embittered by the long strain and misery of the Roman persecutions.

The Acts is not really a separate book ; it is simply the continuation of the third Gospel, the second part of a two-volume history. There is a strongly supported tradition going back to the second century that the author was Paul's companion Luke, who is described by Paul as " Luke the beloved physician " (Col. iv. 14), and who was with him in Rome during his last imprisonment (2 Tim. iv. 11). It is clear that part of the book is the work of an eye-witness describing events at which he had been present ; the narrative is in the first person from xvi. 10 to xvi. 17 ; then it returns to the third person ; the " we " section begins again at xx. 5, and goes on till the arrival of Paul in Jerusalem in xxi. 17 ; finally, it

covers the story of Paul's voyage to Rome, in Chapters xxvii. and xxviii. Now it is not impossible that the author of the main work had access to the "travel-diaries" of a companion of Paul, and skilfully worked them into his book; but the changes from "we" to "they" are so spontaneous and natural, and the style of the two parts is so similar, that we need have little doubt that the whole book is the work of a single hand, and that the writer of the whole was one of the companions of Paul. Several of these companions would be possible authors, and the names of Timothy and Titus among others have been suggested as those of companions of Paul fitted by their experience to write such a book. But scholars have shown with some probability that the language of the Acts has a "medical flavour," as though it were written by a doctor, and when we take in conjunction with this the old tradition of the Church, we need have little hesitation in concluding that the author of both Gospel and Acts was Luke the physician.

If this is so, it appears as though Paul met Luke at Troas about the year A.D. 50 and took him with him on his further travels; a very pretty piece of interpretation is that the man of Macedonia whom Paul saw in his dream was no other than Luke himself (see xvi. 9, 10).[1] It then appears that Luke was left behind at Philippi, which would be quite natural if he was a Macedonian whose home was there, was picked up by Paul some years later on his return journey through Macedonia, travelled with him to Jerusalem and finally accompanied him to

[1] For the details, see Ramsay: *St Paul the Traveller*, pp. 201-204.

Rome. The figure of Luke has been surrounded with traditions, as, for example, that he was a painter ; but we shall be safe in not going beyond the text of Scripture and the probable inferences that may be made from it.

We may next ask questions as to the time and reason of the writing of the book. It begins on the Mount of the Ascension and leaves off with the picture of Paul teaching in his own hired house in Rome, no man hindering him ; this we may suppose to have been taking place in about the year A.D. 64. We naturally ask why the author did not carry the book on further and give us the story of the Apostle's death. Various answers are given ; it is held by some that Luke had intended to write a third book which never saw the light ; or that, having throughout shown the Roman power as favourable to the new religion, he did not wish to spoil his picture by telling the story of the great persecution in which Paul lost his life. But in many ways the most satisfactory view is that the death of Paul is not recorded in Acts because, when the book was written, it had not yet happened ; it is suggested that Luke's historical work is part of the documents of Paul's trial, is in fact Luke's deposition as to the past life of the prisoner and the reasons for his imprisonment. In that case the book was written in Rome about the year A.D. 64, while Paul was still alive and able to ensure the accuracy of what was written. But others hold that it is not possible to maintain so early a date, and that the Acts was more probably the work of Luke's old age, written some twenty years after the death of Paul.

It is in any case not Luke's intention to give a complete history of the Early Church; there are many things we should very much like to know, about which he gives us hardly a hint; for instance, how Christianity found its way to Alexandria, later the home of the first Christian University, and how it was that when Paul reached Rome he found Christians already established there. He never mentions the missions east of the Jordan, he tells us nothing of the activities of the original Apostles, except of Peter and John, and even about them he has little to say; he tells us next to nothing of the organisation and worship of the Early Church. Part of his skill as a historian, which is admittedly great, is shown in his power of selection; all through he narrates typical incidents, which make clear to what kind of people the Apostles had to preach, what problems they encountered in their work and with what success they met in their attempts to solve them. The Acts may very briefly be summed up as the history of a great development and a great controversy.

The development was the expansion of Christianity from its original centre at Jerusalem until it reached Rome, the capital of the ancient world. The outline of the book is given in i. 8: "Ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The earliest hearers of the Apostles were Jews of Palestine who spoke Aramaic (that unliterary dialect of Hebrew which had been used by our Lord Himself), and observed the whole of the Jewish law; and the central figure of the Church was the Apostle Peter. The first sign of expansion was when the Church began to include

the "Hellenists," that is to say, the Greek-speaking Jews who at festival times crowded into Jerusalem from overseas; they read the Old Testament in the Septuagint (Greek) translation, and were on the whole much more lax than the Palestinian Jews in their observance of the Law; their great representative and champion was Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Samaria, the home of a half-Jewish Church, very much despised by the real Jews, was the next field; Philip carried the extension further by preaching to the proselyte[1] from Ethiopia; and Peter, by preaching to Cornelius, who was a Jew neither by race nor by religion but only a "God-fearer" (that is to say, a worshipper of Jehovah loosely attached to the worship and discipline of the synagogue), prepared the way for the greatest expansion of all. This we find recorded in xi. 20: "There were some of them, Cyprians and Cyrenians, who coming down to Antioch spake also to the Greeks proclaiming the Lord Jesus." These Greeks were real Gentiles, having no share in the worship and the hope of Israel; and at this appropriate point there comes finally on to the stage the figure which is henceforth to dominate it, Saul called Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles.

With the opening of this final phase of the expansion of the Church, a phase in the midst of which we are ourselves living, we are brought face to face with the great controversy which nearly split the Christian Church and which underlies almost the whole of the New Testament. Many of

[1] *I.e.* a Gentile who had been received by circumcision into the Jewish Church.

the believers felt that the whole course of this expansion had been wrong, that the revelation and all the promises had been made to Jews only, and that no one could be a member of the Christian Church unless he were either a Jew by birth or had become a member of the Jewish Church by submitting to the rite of circumcision. Paul preached the contrary, that the grace of God is sufficient for all men, Jew and Gentile alike, on the basis of faith in Christ alone. Paul's view of course has won the day, but not without terrific conflict.

One of the echoes of this conflict reaches us in Acts xv., in the story of the first great council of the Church. This was assembled at Jerusalem for the purpose of regularising the position of the Gentile Christians, now too numerous to be disregarded. In the council, Peter threw his weight on the side of Paul and Barnabas, and James the brother of the Lord by his support turned the scale in the liberal direction. A compromise was reached, and a decree was passed as to the status of the Gentile Christians. Unfortunately, the manuscripts are not agreed at this point, and we cannot be absolutely sure what was decided ; in xv. 29, one group of authorities read, "and to keep yourselves from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from fornication and not to do to another what you would not should be done unto you." The other group, and this is the better supported reading, adds, "and from things strangled," and omits the last clause. If the first reading be right, the decree laid down one or two general laws as to the standard of conduct required of Christians ; if the second, it laid down

a minimum of conformity to Jewish ritual rules: "If you Gentiles are going to live on terms of brotherhood with Jewish believers, you must avoid these things which give them particular offence." But the important thing is that in either case the right of the Gentiles to be members of the Church was granted, and nothing was said of circumcision.

The division in the Church, though the cause of it had in theory been removed, was a very long time, in practice, in being healed. Messengers of the strict Jewish party followed Paul about, stirred up trouble in his Churches, tried to undo his work, and finally by their bitter opposition secured his arrest by the Roman Claudius Lysias (xxi. 33). Part of the purpose of the Acts seems to be to mediate between the two parties; to show in the first part that the expansion of the Church had been inevitable and truly the work of God, and in the latter part to show how loyal Paul was to the traditions of the Jews, and on what excellent terms he stood with the Jerusalem Church and its leader, James the brother of the Lord.

Another secondary purpose, which would fit in well with what we have suggested as being the main purpose of the book, is to show that the Roman power in the early period had been consistently favourable to the new religion. The responsibility for the death of Christ is laid at the door not of the Roman governor but of the leaders of the Jews (iii. 13); at Antioch, the troubles which befell the Apostles are due to the devices of the Jews (xiii. 50); on the other hand, Paul successfully appeals to his rights as a Roman citizen (xvi. 37), is left unmolested

by the Roman governor Gallio (xviii. 12-18), is kindly treated by the centurion Julius (xxvii. 3), and, finally, is left preaching in Rome unhindered—ἀκωλύτως, the last word of the book in Greek.

There is a strange superstition current that the Acts is about the missionary journeys of St Paul; in actual fact, barely a third of the book is taken up with that subject, and other subjects come in for almost as extensive treatment. The best way to obtain a unified idea of the book is to abandon the missionary journeys to the writers of school text-books, and to study it from the point of view of the problems of missionary work and methods with which it abounds. The simplest way of doing this is to observe carefully the evangelistic methods of the Apostles as recorded in their speeches, and the causes and character of the opposition which their preaching called forth.

Luke stands in the tradition of great Greek historians. It was the custom of Greek historians to introduce speeches into their narrative at suitable points, in order to give an atmosphere, a general impression, a summary of a situation; where there were no records of what had been actually said, it was part of the skill of their craft to write themselves a speech which might appropriately have been delivered on any particular occasion. Since Luke has so far followed the Greek tradition as to introduce speeches directly into his history, where a modern writer would be more likely to describe or comment, scholars, leaving aside the question of inspiration, have asked whether he may not have followed it still further and, when he had no records to go on,

have written himself suitable speeches to illustrate the situation he is recording. If the author of the book was really a companion of St Paul, clearly he must have heard some of the speeches himself, and have been able to secure from Paul himself some guarantee of the accuracy of what he wrote; in the case of the speeches of Peter and Stephen, there must have been many living who could give him information as to what had been said on each occasion. We need not suppose that Luke has recorded actual words; considerations of space would forbid the inclusion of a sermon exactly as it was spoken, and the impression left on our minds is that of an excellently clear summary of the main points that were made. In spite of the assertion of many scholars to the contrary, the main argument in favour of the reliability of the speeches is the flood of light they shed on the narrative at the points where they occur. If it could be proved that they were merely free compositions of Luke, we should lose all our confidence in the trustworthiness of Luke, and so be deprived of all certainty as to the history of the Early Church. Those who believe in the inspiration of Scripture and the providential guidance of the Church will find it hard to admit that this could possibly be the case.

The speeches may be divided into three classes, those to Jews, those to Gentiles, and those concerned with the trial of Paul; the first two of these only are important for this particular study.

I. We begin with the speeches of Peter. In the first days of the Church the only point which needed

proof was the resurrection of Christ. It was this which had finally dispelled the doubts of the disciples as to the Messiahship of Jesus, and it is this fact which Peter is constantly trying to drive home; in ii. 14-36, he gives two kinds of proof; first, the evidence of those who had been with Jesus after His resurrection, and secondly, the evidence of the Old Testament. This use of the prophetic Scriptures was made by the Apostles the basis of all their work amongst the Jews, and it has remained to this day the main weapon in the preaching of Christianity to the Jews. In Stephen's speech in Chapter vii. and in Paul's speech at Antioch in Pisidia we find the same method used; the summary of Old Testament history is used to secure the attention of the listeners, and to drive home the statement of the claims of Christ with which the speech ends.

At Lystra, where they were dealing with a half-civilised people who did not even speak Greek, the tactics of the Apostles are quite different; they argue along the lines of Natural Religion and the revelation of God in Nature, and thus establish contact with their hearers in terms of what they knew (xiv. 15-17). Still more interesting is Paul's sermon to the philosophers at Athens; here he draws upon his Greek education and talks in philosophic style about the nature of God, with a little quotation from Greek poetry thrown in (xvii. 22-31). The best comment on this speech is Paul's remark to his next audience: "When I came among you . . . I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 1-2).

II. It is important to notice whence came the opposition to the preaching of the Gospel. Even after Paul had said in Antioch, "Now we turn to the Gentiles," we find that in the very next city, Iconium, the preachers begin by going into the synagogue, and this was the Apostolic custom; with the consequence that their main opponents were constantly the Jews (see xiv. 19; xvii. 5-6); the uproar begun by the Jews would spread to the Gentile friends of the synagogue, and finally reach the Roman officials. The only other cause of opposition mentioned is the threatening of commercial interests by the preaching of the Gospel (see xvi. 19; xix. 25). It is equally instructive to notice in what quarters the Gospel was most warmly received; it will be found that over and over again the Apostles found friends among the "devout, the God-fearers," that is the Gentiles who shared in the worship of the synagogue; they had sufficient religious insight to welcome the message of the Gospel, and were free from the bitter prejudices of their Jewish neighbours.

It has been well said that the book might be called the Acts of the Holy Ghost. It opens with the fulfilment on the day of Pentecost of the promise of Christ to send His disciples the Spirit with power; and every page is an evidence of His work. "The Holy Spirit and we have resolved," says James in xv. 28; when Paul wished to go into Bithynia "the Spirit of Jesus suffered him not" (xvi. 7); and so it goes on; "the Church walking in the fear of the Lord and the consolation of the Holy Spirit was multiplied" (ix. 31). And with the work of the

Holy Spirit, there is a corresponding emphasis on Christian joy and hope; "there was great joy in that city" (viii. 8); "The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost" (xiii. 52).

Finally, the Acts may be studied as the record of the lives of great men; not perfect (see xv. 39), but full of the love of Christ, and pioneers of His kingdom. We shall have more to say of Peter and much more of Paul; but we must not forget the figures of lesser rank; James the brother of the Lord, first Bishop of Jerusalem, who was held in respect even by the Jews for his old-world piety; Barnabas the Son of Consolation, who "gave Paul his first curacy" (xi. 25-6), and after their disagreement was reconciled to him before the end; and Apollos, the learned Alexandrian Jew, who built up the Church in Corinth and, as some believe, wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews; and Stephen, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, echoing in death his Master's words of forgiveness. "All these died in faith," fulfilling each his separate vocation and reminding us that it takes all sorts to make a Church, and that, in the Heavenly City, each of the foundations is adorned with a different jewel.

Note to Chapter VI

The study of the Acts will for English people for a great many years be associated with the name of one man, Sir William Mitchell Ramsay. Starting work as an archæologist in Asia Minor with no very definite religious views, Ramsay gradually became convinced of the historical truth of the New Testa-

ment, and has vindicated the accuracy of the Acts, especially, in a series of most interesting books. Of these the most important for our purpose is *St Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, which contains in a most readable form all that is really necessary for the study of the latter part of Acts.

The manuscript known as Codex Bezae, or more shortly as D, has a great many interesting variant readings in the Acts; for instance, it tells us that Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus "from the fifth hour to the tenth hour," after closing hours, in fact; and that the Philippian magistrates came to get rid of Paul, "because they remembered the earthquake." Most of these are noticed by Ramsay as they occur, but if anyone wishes to read the complete Bezan text, it has been recently published, if I remember rightly, by the veteran Canon Wilson. One or two scholars think that this is the original text, but it is more probably a second-century revision; at least that is what Ramsay thinks, and he is generally right.

VII

THE WRITINGS OF PAUL

1. *The Man and his Work*

Some people believe that, when the Apostles chose Matthias to take the place in their number of the traitor Judas, they acted hastily, and that God had intended that place to be taken by a man whom He was preparing, one Saul of Tarsus. Be that as it may, Saul called Paul is certainly worthy of Apostolic title, since he became the greatest teacher whom the Church of Christ has known, and has influenced human thought more deeply than any man except his Master. The Church of Christ began as a Jewish sect; that it was able to burst the bonds of Judaism and become in a generation a world-wide power we owe largely to the courage, wisdom and devotion of Paul, who fought almost single-handed the battle of Christian liberty against Jewish exclusiveness.

He speaks of himself as separated to the Gospel from his mother's womb (Gal. i. 15). It is true that his life-work began at a particular moment on the Damascus road, when he ceased to kick against the pricks and accepted the lordship of Jesus; but all his previous life had been a training for that work. He was by birth, and in many ways remained to the end, a Jew of the Jews, bred to the Old Testament

and filled with a passion for the Law. Even his persecution of the Christian Church was the act not of a man who was opposed to God, but of one who, though not according to knowledge, was filled with a desire for truth and righteousness. As he tells us, he excelled all his contemporaries in the Jewish religion (Gal. i. 14). But in that cosmopolitan city of Tarsus, with its bustling commercial life, its Greek University and its evil religions, he could not but be powerfully affected by another influence, that of the decaying world of Greece. He was probably not learned in the Greek sense, but he can write very good vigorous Greek when he has a mind, and can make quotations from the Greek poets (as many English people can quote scraps from Shakespeare without having read his plays); and he well understood Greek life with all its interests and temptations—the games, the worship in the idol temple, the philosophic lecture-hall. Most important of all perhaps, he was a citizen of Rome; thereby he not merely obtained certain privileges and immunities, but also became deeply imbued with a sense of the unity of the world, and of the right of Christ to rule the soul wherever Cæsar ruled the body.

But besides these external advantages, Paul had manifold gifts of mind and heart. He must have had, too, extraordinary vigour of body; in spite of weakness (2 Cor. x. 10) and constant illness (Gal. iv. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 1-10), shipwreck, exposure, physical violence and long imprisonment, he succeeded in comparatively few years in traversing a great part of the Roman Empire, and, while sup-

porting himself by the labours of his hands, in performing the most varied and exacting labours in the realm of thought, preaching, writing and administration. The mind which directed all this energy was subtle and quick in argument, as we learn from the Epistle to the Romans, wide in the sweep of its imaginations, and profound in the depths of thought to which it could penetrate. The nature of the man was ardent and impetuous, now flaming out in passionate eloquence against the wickedness of man or in withering scorn of the miserable Christians who had made him play the fool; at another time melting in words of the most moving tenderness (1 Thess. ii. 1-12), or rising to the sublimest heights of poetic imagination (1 Cor. xiii.). But what made him the man he was, was neither more nor less than his experience of Christ; it was not merely that he was privileged to see visions and to hear words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, not merely that special miracles were wrought through him; the man himself was the miracle, in that he first showed to the world what could be wrought by the indwelling of Christ in man. He speaks often of his prayers, and writes from time to time prayers of extraordinary richness and intensity, from which we can learn something of the depth and fervour of his life with God. But not only his prayers, all his writings throb with the consciousness of that God, that Saviour whom he most learned to know in his times of prayer, and whom it was his joy and his mission to make known to the world, whose presence upheld him in toils and persecutions and made even the crown of martyrdom seem a thing desirable,

since it was but a short road to lead him to the heavenly vision of Christ.

As one of his principal burdens, Paul mentions the care of all the Churches ; of many of them, he was himself the founder ; and, as his vast experience and Apostolic authority gave him ever greater weight in the counsels of the Church, it was natural that the Churches should turn to him in all their difficulties for advice and strength. Paul was thus compelled, in the pressure of all his other work, to carry on a lively correspondence with people in all parts of the world. Some of his letters, like that to Philemon, were mere notes to private individuals on private affairs ; Galatians and 2 Corinthians are passionate utterances out of the depths of his heart ; Romans is calmer and more statesmanlike, rising almost to the dignity of a treatise. Sometimes the recipients were the members of a single Church ; but Ephesians appears to be simply the Ephesian copy of a circular letter sent to all the Churches of the district. Once at least he instructed two Churches to which he was writing to exchange their letters (Col. iv. 16) ; doubtless his letters would be among the great treasures of the Churches which received them ; copies would be multiplied and circulated, and in less than a hundred years from the death of the Apostle, the complete collection of letters which we possess had come into existence as a unified whole.

Paul is by general consent a very difficult writer. Part of the difficulty we find in understanding him lies in the fact that his letters are real letters and that we do not possess the rest of the correspondence,

though often we can make out roughly what it was all about : new people and events of which we know nothing keep crossing the horizon, and the background of the whole is a world of which most of us know very little. But beside all this, Paul makes very great demands on his readers ; his mind moves very rapidly, and often, like the poet Browning, before he has fully developed one idea, he is flying far on ahead to deal with the next subject. Moreover, he is a really deep thinker, and like all great thinkers demands that we shall give our whole mind and attention to him, familiarise ourselves with the kind of language which he uses and with the general lines of his thought, and thus make our own as much as possible of the rich treasures which he offers us.

There is no easy way of mastering the thought of Paul. Each Epistle, if we are really to understand it and learn from it, calls for hard work. A rapid reading gives us next to nothing ; we must go slowly, work at the difficulties, re-read, expand the argument, draw help from all the available sources, and not least share to the limit of our capacity in the Pauline experience of prayer and service. But there is the certainty that in the end we shall get something very much worth having. Paul was the first person to think out in detail the meaning of the life and death of Christ for the individual and for the world. His exposition is still the greatest that has ever been given, and no modern book can compensate for an ignorance of the work of the pioneer. Those who have learnt to understand his thought and his message come back to the Gospels with new ques-

tions, new sympathy and understanding, and find new help to guide and uplift them in the dusty ways of life.

2. *The Epistle to the Romans*

There were four crises in the life of the Apostle Paul. The first was his conversion on the Damascus road (Acts ix. 1-19), the second, fourteen years later, his appointment by the Church for work amongst the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 1-3), the third, his departure from Corinth for Jerusalem, which marked the end of his life as a free missionary (Acts xx. 1-6), the last, his appeal to Cæsar (Acts xxv. 11). At the time of his departure from Corinth, in the spring probably of the year A.D. 57, Paul had no idea that the end of his liberty was approaching; during the voyage, the Spirit bore witness in every place that bonds and imprisonment awaited him (Acts xx. 23); but it appears that at its beginning he was still planning the extension of his activity to wider spheres.

The purpose of his journey to Jerusalem was one which it should not have taken him many days to complete. As we learn from many parts of the New Testament, he had for some years been arranging a great collection in all the Gentile Churches for the support of the poor Jewish Christians, and the time had now come for him to take the representatives of the various Churches to Jerusalem to present their offerings to the heads of the Church. After that it was the Apostle's plan to continue his journeys

still further to the West, even as far as Spain; and, on the way, inevitably and naturally, to visit the Church of Rome (Rom. xv. 21-9).

But a visit to the Church of Rome presented many problems. It had been Paul's guiding principle, as he tells us, never to build on another man's foundation, and he could not therefore go to the Roman Church in the character of a missionary; nor, since they were not a Church of his founding, could he claim any Apostolic authority over them, and visit them as he visited his own Churches. On the other hand, they were a predominantly Gentile Church, and as Apostle of the Gentiles he could claim the deepest interest in their welfare; and further, from the very fact that the Roman Church was in Rome, it acquired the greatest importance; it was only natural that it should obtain that metropolitan position among the Churches which in course of time was conceded to it as of right. On all grounds, it was necessary that Paul should visit the Romans, and accordingly he took the new step of writing to a Church with which he had no direct connection, in order to prepare the way for his visit. He wrote for two purposes; partly to introduce himself, and partly to safeguard himself. All kinds of rumours had been floating about the Christian world concerning him; although the passion of the Galatian days had died down, there were still many who were not satisfied with the admission of the Gentiles and the victory of Paul, and who were ready to assail both his personal character and his loyalty to the truth of the Gospel of Christ. To assure the Romans of his orthodoxy and his full

acceptance of the essential Gospel, he sets out in this Epistle, more fully and in more ordered form than elsewhere, the great outlines of his message. For that reason this Epistle is more than any of the others a treatise in theology, and can be read almost without regard to the circumstances in which it was written.

The book has well been called the Gospel according to St Paul, and it is hard to overestimate the importance of its first eight chapters. Someone has said that all great revivals in religion begin with a return to the study of the New Testament, and most of them with a closer study of Romans i.-viii. ; certainly this Epistle had a most profound effect on the mind of Luther and of John Wesley ; and there has probably been no great leader in Christian thought and action who has not trained and disciplined his mind and spirit along the lines here laid down by Paul.

Paul had come to the feet of Christ not, like the other Apostles, in the gradual realisation of years, but in the shock of a sudden revelation. In a moment his old world had been laid in fragments, and he had had to reconstruct the whole of life in the light of this new experience that had come to him. What did it all mean ? We can catch, perhaps, the echoes of his three days of blindness (Acts ix. 9) in vii. 7-25 of this Epistle ; he knew that in the days of his service to the Law, life had been an unresolved discord, a struggling after righteousness constantly baffled by the undefeated presence of sin ; he knew that he now had the victory, and that the change was connected with the sudden manifestation

of Jesus Christ. When he had discovered what that connection was, he at once set out to preach, and in this Epistle, in the light of twenty-five years of missionary experience, he sets forth most fully and clearly the centrality of Christ in the life of the world, and the basic character of faith as that means whereby the life of man is made one with the life of God in Christ.

The introduction to the Epistle is more elaborate than is usual with Paul; but there is a gap between him and his readers, and this must be crossed before he can come to his real business. Note how gracefully he does it; on the one side is Paul the servant of Jesus Christ, and on the other are those in Rome who are beloved of God and saints by vocation; and in the middle, like the keystone of an arch, is our Lord Jesus Christ (i. 1-7). Once the bridge has been safely crossed, he can pass on to tell them of his desire to preach the Gospel even to those who are in Rome; the thought suggests a comparison; the might of Rome with all her wealth and all her armies, the feebleness and poverty and fewness of the preachers of the Gospel. But Paul is not dismayed; his very purpose is to show the adequacy of this Gospel to meet Rome or any other adversary; the weakness is only apparent, the reality of the Gospel is power. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (i. 16-17). Every one of those great words—power, salvation, believe, is important, and they should all be carefully studied with the help of a concordance.

Paul then proceeds to develop this summary of the Gospel in the close and concentrated argument which lasts to the end of Chapter xi. It is one of the merits of Christianity that it has never been afraid to face the world as it really is. If the Gospel is a power, it is well first to estimate the forces arrayed against it. Paul does not argue; he merely draws heathen life as he knew it; he gives a reasoned account of the progressive degradation of mankind. Foolish speculation about God has produced idolatry, with its inevitable accompaniments of cruelty and immorality, and in the process of time even the moral sense itself has become debased (i. 18-32). Christianity has done so much to purge society that many will wonder whether Paul's language is not strained; but those who live in the midst of heathendom know that it is no whit exaggerated. But the ancient world was not of one level of blackness; there were even among the pagans noble souls who reprobated the corruption around them. Paul's answer is that reprobation of others is no excuse for a man's own sin; if the moral consciousness is aroused, its judgment must only be more decisive that no man is free from sin. It is clear that he is thinking primarily of the Jews, and in ii. 17 he directly addresses them; they claim the privilege of God's revelation; but this only avails if it has led a man to live an upright life. If it has not done so, the Jew with his greater knowledge is in a far worse position before the judgment-seat of Christ than the Gentile who has lived uprightly according to the revelation of God given by conscience and the natural world (ii. 1-29).

If that be true, says an objector,[1] there is really no difference between Jew and Gentile. Not so, rejoins Paul, Israel has very real privileges, but they are privileges of *revelation*, and nothing can acquit a man of responsibility for his actions before God (iii. 1-6). The first section of the argument ends with a succession of passages from the Old Testament to reinforce the point; the witness of conscience is that no man is without sin, and the testimony of Scripture bears this out (iii. 9-18).

The old ways, then, the way of natural religion and of the Law, were failures. At once Paul passes on to the new. The real problem is, "How can God forgive sins?" Justice will not allow them to be treated as if they had never happened; a real remedy is needed. In a passage of extraordinary pregnancy, Paul sets forth the Christian doctrine of forgiveness: on the one hand is the fact of the universal sinfulness of man, on the other is the righteousness of God; the two meet in the Cross of Christ; in that alone there is sufficient power of redemption to be appropriated by the faith of the sinner; in the light of the central event of human history, God could overlook the sins of former times; in the light of it He can forgive sins at this present time (iii. 19-26).

It cannot be said that Paul has explained the doctrine of the Atonement, and it is not easy to determine in detail his exact meaning; but it is

[1] It is difficult to understand the argument unless we remember that Paul is defending himself against criticisms of his doctrine; after each stage in the argument, he recalls the criticisms which can be or have been made upon it, and proceeds to answer them; each section is an answer to criticisms of the preceding section.

certain that he is describing an experience which to many Christians is the greatest thing in their lives. The poet Cowper tells us how, as he was reading these words, as it were scales fell from his eyes and he entered into peace. The issue is clear; acceptance before God on the basis of faith in the Cross of Christ alone.

> "Upon a life I did not live,
> Upon a death I did not die,
> Another's life, Another's death
> I stake my whole eternity."

No vaunted righteousness of man can bring him to God; acceptance is a matter not for boasting but for the deepest humility. Jew and Gentile are brought to the same point of utter abasement before the Cross (iii. 27-31).

At once the objector breaks in: what of Abraham and the promises made on the basis of Law? Paul has no difficulty in proving that Abraham is an argument not against but for his view; long before the covenant by works, Abraham had established his position in the sight of God by faith; indeed the covenant itself was the reward of that faith (iv.). He is then free to enlarge upon the blessings of our new state; peace with God, assurance and unshakable joy, in the confidence that the risen life of Christ will do more for us even than His death (v. 1-11). In Christ we are restored to that which our first parents lost by sin; Christ is the founder of a new and better lineage than that of Adam (v. 12-21).

Once again the objector has his word : if righteousness depends on faith alone, then conduct is a matter of indifference. Certainly not, says Paul ; faith is something far more tremendous than that ; it is a moral earthquake. The Christian, and of this baptism is a witness, shares in the experience of Christ ; a real death of the old self, and a new life, with wholly new powers and a new allegiance (vi. 1-11). Or it is like an exchange of masters ; in the old days of sin and self-indulgence, we owned no responsibility to God ; now that the chains of the old life are broken and we have entered on the service of God, the old life can make no claim upon us (vi. 11-23). Or like a change of husbands ; the body, being the representative of the old worldly life, is now as it were dead, and the soul has found a new husband in Christ ; the old dead life cannot return to spoil the happiness of the new (vii. 1-6).

One important question remains to be settled, the relation of the Law to the Gospel. The Law, Paul cannot doubt, is from God, but its function had been not to take away sin, but to reveal it, and so to make not for happiness but for misery, in an awakened and unsatisfied moral consciousness. What had been done by Christ was a thing that the Law could never do ; it could show, He alone could take away sin (vii. 7-25).

With this thought, Paul rises to the height of one of his most sustained passages of eloquence. Christ has come as deliverer, and there is no condemnation to those who are in Him. In the agelong conflict between flesh and Spirit, between God and His enemies, we are now on the right side (viii. 1-11).

If we are asked for evidence of this, we have our changed relationship to God, and the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost (viii. 12-17). Not that the conflict is over yet ; the whole creation is eagerly awaiting the time of our entering upon the fulness of our heritage (viii. 17-25). But even now we are not left without the support and comfort of the Holy Spirit, and even our short sight can discern something of the loving purpose of God, and that may well satisfy us. So he rises to the full height of the glorious conclusion. " I am persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord " (viii. 31-9).

But there remains yet one outstanding problem with which the Apostle must deal, before he can pass on to the practical part of the Epistle. What is the relation of Israel to the new revelation ? The Jews are in a special sense the heirs of the kingdom, and yet clearly in Paul's reckoning the vast majority of them are excluded. This question is added as a kind of appendix to the great doctrinal chapters which had preceded it. The discussion is not easy, and it seems as though all the time Paul broke off before the crucial point was reached. The reason of this is that he is arguing on the method called *reductio ad absurdum*, and leaves his readers to take the final step which will show the inconsistency with the character of God of the view which he rejects.

Two points must be constantly borne in mind ; first, that the purposes of God have always walked along the path of election ; even between the two sons of Isaac, God had to choose Jacob, who had

capacity for spiritual growth, and reject Esau, who had not. Mere sonship is not enough to inherit the promises; and if the greater part of Israel is excluded, it is no sign of a change in the purposes of God (ix. 1-13). If it be objected that the doctrine of election implies the complete overriding of the human will and, therefore, the end of human responsibility, Paul can only reply that the purposes of God are inscrutable, but always tend to mercy (ix. 14-29). This is the second great thought. It is true that the Jews, going the long way round, have failed to find the righteousness of God, and that the Gentiles, coming by the short cut of faith, have anticipated them (ix. 30-x. 11); but this failure to find was also due to Israel's unwillingness to hear, and not to any mismanagement on the part of God (x. 12-21). It is not true that God has cast off the Jews; Paul the Jew alone is sufficient to prove the fact that some Jews can and do come to God. In the meantime, in the merciful purpose of God, their exclusion has been used as a means to bring the Gentiles in (xi. 1-12). So the failure of the Jews is to the Gentiles a source not of glorying but of fear, since election is not absolute, but conditional on response to the will of God (xi. 13-24). But Paul cannot rest satisfied with this, he must look on to a day in which the failure will be made a success, and Israel and the Gentiles will together enter into the fulness of the purposes of God. He warns his readers that this is a mystery, but lifts up his heart in thankfulness to God, whose wisdom is but another name for His power of bringing to pass, by unsearchable ways, His everlasting purposes (xi. 25-36).

At length Paul can proceed to the practical part of the letter. The dominant thought throughout is that of unity. The doctrinal part has stressed the individual relation to God ; but a man, at the same time that he is born again into a new relationship with God, is born into a new society, the Church, and all his conduct for the future must be regulated by a new social consciousness. The surrender of the will to God must have its effect in loving service of the brethren (xii. 1-3). For those who are appointed to office in the Church, this will mean faithful performance of their duties ; for the simple Christian, it will mean diligence in work, honesty, generosity, above all humility ; for pride is that failing which above all others mars the unity of the body (xii. 4-21). There was one special respect in which this humility needed to show itself under the guise of forbearance. The question had arisen as to the extent to which the Christian might participate in Gentile life ; it was a matter of eating and drinking, of observances of little rules. To Paul these could not seem important ; " nothing is unclean in itself " (xiv. 14), " the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost " (xiv. 17). But a very important question was involved—that of mutual tolerance and forbearance within the Church ; to some of the weaker brethren, these were matters of great moment. The attitude of the stronger must be not to judge but to submit ; the rule is the example of Christ, who pleased not Himself, that the unity of the Church may be preserved, and God be glorified (xiv. 1-xv. 7).

But we have deserted the order of the Epistle. Besides the fellowship of the Church, the Christian owes a debt to the community to which he belongs. The Christian, though he was Christian, was still a citizen of the Roman Empire, and he owed a debt of loyalty to the earthly rulers set over him. This letter was written in the days before the Roman power had begun to take cognisance of the Christian Church; but there is no reason to believe that Paul would have changed his mind in the persecuting days; if there must be a conflict between the Church and the state, let the Church be quite sure that its conduct is unexceptionable. But besides, the Christian has a duty towards those amongst whom he lives. Our Lord had given the widest interpretation to the words "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and when Paul quotes those words, it is inconceivable that he should limit their application to the Christian brethren; he must have been thinking of the Christians in their relationship with the heathen about them, for whom they could do so much by consistency of life and whole-heartedness of love (xiii.).

At xv. 7, he returns once more to the personal note; the ministry of Christ was to both Jews and Gentiles; and Paul's special work as Apostle of the Gentiles has given him courage to write to the Romans; his reason for writing is not any feeling of lack on their part, but only the confidence of his own Apostolic labour in all the lands between Jerusalem and Illyricum (xv. 7-21). This leads him on to the discussion of his plans, with which we began our study of the Epistle, and in xv. 33, the letter seems to have reached its close.

But the Apostle reopens it with a series of greetings to individuals in the Church. It is a curious fact that the Epistle seems to have three endings, in xv. 33, xvi. 20, and xvi. 25-7. This has led some to question whether perhaps xv. 33 is not really the end of Romans, and whether the remainder of the Epistle is not part of another letter. It is noticeable that in xvi. 17-19, the topic of false teachers is introduced, and this comes in unexpectedly after what has gone before in the Epistle. Also, it is doubted whether Paul is likely to have had such a large number of friends in a Church which he had never seen. But all this is hypothetical, and there is no adequate reason to doubt that Chapter xvi. is part of the original Epistle to the Romans. Travel was constant in the early days of the Church, as we can tell from following the movements of Aquila and Priscilla as we know them. It is true that some of the names suggest a connection with Ephesus rather than with Rome, but we know too little of the movements of Paul's friends to assert that any of those mentioned could not have been in Rome at this time.

It is refreshing to turn from the critical question to this most interesting chapter itself. One or two of the names are familiar to us, but for the most part they are quite unknown. It is important to note how many of them are the names of women ; if Narcissus (xvi. 11) is the Emperor Claudius' celebrated freedman of that name, all the Christians of his household would be slaves, and there are other names which suggest that such was the condition in life of their owners. In thinking of the Early

Church, we are apt to estimate in terms of its leaders. But no society can be good if the rank and file of it are of poor quality ; the very success of the Apostolic Church bears witness to the sterling worth of the humble folk who made up the greater part of its membership. This chapter brings vividly before us the little community of humble people holding on against all the power of heathen Rome, and preparing the way for the acknowledged triumph of Christ over Cæsar. As we think of them, we are reminded of our incalculable debt to all those simple and unrecorded folk in every age, who have kept alight the fires of unpretentious Christian devotion and service, and have preserved for us unimpaired the glorious heritage of membership in the body of Christ.[1]

3. *The Corinthian Correspondence*

Corinth, on its commanding position between two seas, was one of the most important commercial centres of the ancient world. Though it had been destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C., by the time of Paul it had been rebuilt and had long since regained its former prosperity. It was fabulously rich, and had an unenviable reputation for wickedness even among the wicked cities of the Eastern Roman Empire.

[1] It is fortunate that the greatest Epistle of Paul has been the subject of the greatest commentary of modern times, that of Sanday and Headlam. Much of the book is of value only to scholars, but every one can learn much from its excellent introduction, paraphrase of Chapters i.-viii., and detached notes. Bishop Moule's exposition, like all his work, is beautiful, scholarly and spiritual.

Paul visited it first on his second missionary tour. Discouraged by the comparative failure of his work in Corinth and the opposition which it aroused, he was granted there a special vision of encouragement (Acts xviii. 9-11). His visit lasted eighteen months, during the course of which he was enabled to gather out from Jews and Gentiles the nucleus of a Church; among the former were his faithful friends Aquila and Priscilla. The Church in Corinth was visited also by Peter and probably by Barnabas, but the most important influence in their development, after that of Paul himself, was that of Apollos the Alexandrian Jew (Acts xviii. 24-8), who, after his conversion, seems to have pressed into the service of the Gospel the resources of his learning in the philosophy of Greece.

Paul, during his stay at Ephesus (Acts xix.), wrote a letter to the Corinthian Church, as we learn from 1 Cor. v. 9; this letter is now lost, and we only know of its existence because part of it they misunderstood and wrote again for further advice; the letter in which they did so is also lost, but we are able to tell to some extent what it was about, since, whenever in 1 Corinthians Paul says "Now concerning" (vii. 1, 25; viii. 1, etc.), it appears that he is preparing to answer one of the difficulties of his correspondents. Before Paul had had time to answer them, news reached him through the friends or servants of a lady named Chloe that all was not well in the state of his Corinthian friends. Accordingly, in the winter probably of the year A.D. 55, he felt led to write the letter which we know as 1 Corinthians. If Romans shows Paul at his

greatest as a theologian, this Epistle reveals him as a great and wise administrator and organiser; this is perhaps the most varied and comprehensive letter which he ever wrote.

It is not an easy letter to deal with, because it treats of many not closely-connected topics; it is simplest to follow the order in which these occur, but the student should go over the Epistle two or three times, and see the light which one part throws on another. The immediate cause of the trouble was apparent enough; the Church was divided against itself, and that not on a question of doctrine but simply on a personal question of loyalty to the different Christian leaders; one party followed Paul, another Peter with his Jewish style of preaching, another the learning and eloquence of Apollos;[1] so "Christ is divided" (i. 13).

Paul deals first with the Apollos party, who laid a disproportionate stress on wisdom in the preaching of the Gospel. Three great principles he lays down in settling the place of wisdom in the religion of Jesus, the centrality of the Cross, and the position to be accorded to the Christian worker.

I. Worldly wisdom has not succeeded in bringing the world to God (i. 21). It can never bring a man to God, and will probably have only the effect of making him proud (iii. 18-21). And yet there is a place for wisdom, for those who are far enough advanced in the Christian life; we have to deal

[1] I cannot believe that the words "and I of Christ" (i. 12) imply the existence of a "Christ-party" in the Corinthian Church; they are surely the expression of Paul's own loyalty to Christ.

with the great mysteries of God, and in the study of those, there is scope for the highest intellectual powers (ii. 6-16), but only as those powers are surrendered to the illumination of the Spirit of God.

II. The first necessity of a Church is to be firmly established on the unchanging foundation which is Christ Himself (iii. 11). This had been the centre of Paul's first preaching to the Corinthians; he had not attempted, as he had done at Athens, to give his words a colouring from the wisdom of the world, but had been content with the simple preaching of the Cross (i. 23; ii. 2), that symbol of utter weakness, which caused the Jews to stumble and the Greeks to mock, but which was yet the power of God unto salvation (i. 24). For proof of the power of the Cross, he could appeal to the Corinthians themselves, whose own calling was an illustration of the principle that God uses the weak and the despised things to bring to pass His purposes of power (i. 26-31). It is a well-known fact that the Church which finally defeated the Empire of Rome was in its early days largely composed of slaves and women.

III. In no one is this divine principle more clearly shown than in the case of an Apostle. If Apostleship is a glorious calling, it is in the eyes of the world indistinguishable from contempt and dishonour (iv. 9-14). An Apostle is nothing, a mere messenger and instrument in the hand of God (iii. 5-9); the highest glory of the worker is to be lost in his work. To this idea he returns in a digression later in the Epistle. An Apostle has, indeed, authority, but

his glory is to imitate his Master and to take the lowest place; Paul himself, so far from exercising authority, has made himself a slave to all, he has become all things to all men, that he might by all means save some (ix., esp. 19-23).

After an earnest appeal to his beloved children (iv. 15-21), Paul passes on from the question of unity to deal with the matters about which the Corinthian Christians had written to him. The Church was, indeed, in serious case; there was a party of lawlessness, which defied the Apostolic authority of Paul (iv. 18), partly on the ground that, though an Apostle, he had never exercised the Apostolic privilege of living at the expense of his converts, and partly because, while professing the doctrine of Christian liberty, he had not in their opinion pushed that doctrine nearly to its logical conclusion. Professing themselves to have superior wisdom (note Paul's scornful and repeated "Do ye not know?" in vi. 15, 16, 19), they put forth the doctrine that to the Christian all things are lawful; and the consequence had been several serious lapses from the Christian law of purity.

The next six chapters treat of many subjects which we need not study in detail; but if we remember always to think back to the principle underlying Paul's teaching, we shall find that his handling of the problems which seem most remote from modern conditions has a real message for the present day.

I. *The purity of the Christian community.* In the world we are bound to rub shoulders with sinners;

but what is to be our attitude to sinners in the Church ? Paul is quite clear that the Church must be kept holy. A man had committed a very grievous sin and had not been expelled ; the result of such leniency, Paul says, will be that the evil will spread like leaven until the whole is defiled (v. 1-13). The same principle of the purity of the Church must decide in the matter of going to law. If disputes must arise, the place to settle them is in the Church, but the ideal is a unity of spirit and a forbearance worthy of those who have been " washed and made holy and righteous." If the Church is pure, disputes will not arise (vi. 1-12).

II. *The purity of the individual.* This is a problem which is always with us. Some of the Corinthians had maintained that immorality was as much a matter of indifference as eating and drinking (vi. 13). Paul replies that this is not so, that evil conduct is bound to have permanent and evil effects on the whole man, and that through the control and consecration of even the natural desires of the body we are to glorify God who made them (vi. 20).

Some of the Christians had reacted in a directly opposite direction and said that all physical desire, even marriage itself, was wrong. Asceticism is a constant reaction from surroundings of low morality. But this was not in the least the meaning of the teaching of Paul. To treat the body hardly is not to glorify God in it. In all the detailed prescriptions about marriage, virginity and so on, two principles stand out clearly ; first, that no external or physical condition can recommend us to God ;

rather we are to take the external conditions as God gives them and to use them as a guide to our own vocation (vii. 24). Secondly, that we are to sit very loose to the things of this world, for the fashion of this world passeth away. Desire may so easily become a master not a servant, and the end of all our doings is to be the glory and the service of God.

III. *Joining in heathen worship.* This is a problem which is, of course, very familiar to us in the mission-field; but even at home it confronts every Christian, in the form of the question of the legitimacy for the Christian of certain pleasures, amusements and careers. This question has already met us in our study of Romans, and here again Paul works on the principle that the individual cannot decide such a matter purely for himself; an idol is, we know, nothing in the world, but some of us are weak in conscience, and the principle of Christian charity demands that we should bear the weakness of the weak (viii. 1-13). But that very profession of strength has its dangers. The children of Israel had special privileges, and yet they fell into sin, and lost their privileges; the Corinthians must not foolishly run into temptation (x. 1-14). Moreover, to the idol worshipper, the worship has the very definite meaning of participation in the being of the idol; surely those who in the Holy Communion are made partakers of the Lord could not wish to be partakers also with the idols (x. 15-22).

IV. There had grown up serious disorders in *the Public Worship of the Church.* It is interesting

to study the next two or three chapters with a view to learning all we can about the worship of the earliest Christian communities; we should probably find their arrangements very primitive and perhaps even irreverent. Trouble had grown up even round the central service of the Lord's Supper; it was still celebrated as a real meal and not in the symbolic way which became the practice of the Church before many years had passed (xi. 21). This had given some of the Christians an opportunity of displaying at that service their pride and lack of consideration for their poorer brethren. Paul reminds them sharply of the circumstances in which that service was instituted and what it is intended to signify, and urges them to a greater reverence and fear in their behaviour (xi. 17-34).

The great principle which underlies orderliness in worship is charity; if the members of the Church of Christ meet together without love they cannot really meet in the service of Him who bade His followers love one another. At this point, the consideration of this principle leads Paul to break off, as his way is, into one of his incomparable flights of eloquence. The hymn of love (xiii.) is, perhaps, the most famous of all Paul's writings; the language is hard to understand in detail, but the passage sounds depths and breathes a spirit which are a constant inspiration to those who read it. It was only to be expected that the Romans should say in admiration of those who received such teaching, "How these Christians love one another."

But this passage has a special appropriateness here. The order of the Church at Corinth had been

disturbed by those possessed of what are known as "charismatic gifts." These were special gifts of the Holy Ghost, accompanied by great excitement and sometimes with utterances in strange tongues, a phenomenon which accompanied the first giving of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 1-12), and has recurred from time to time on occasions of great religious emotion.[1] Those at Corinth who possessed such gifts were extremely proud of them, called themselves "spiritual," and despised those who had only the more ordinary Christian graces. One of the greatest services Paul ever did to the Church was when he directed attention away from these special endowments, on the one hand to the great Christian virtues, and on the other to the more humble gifts of teaching and administration which make for discipline and order in the Church.

The great principle, as we have seen, is love. The Church is like a body of which no member is able to dispense with the others. All the gifts which the Spirit gives are good and can be used for the service of the whole; but since they are all given from the one source, they must not be used as occasions of friction and boasting. With the principle of love in our mind, we can easily settle the questions of public worship; two ends have to be borne in mind, the edification of the faithful and the witness to the heathen. Now the special gifts are of value as witnesses to the power of God, if any heathen are present and join in Christian worship (xiv. 22); but for the Christians, they are gifts of little value;

[1] It appeared a hundred years ago in the sect founded by Edward Irving, the friend of Carlyle.

the man who can preach is better than the man who can speak in a strange tongue. Finally, adds Paul, with that common sense which is so refreshing in the New Testament, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (xiv.).

Finally, before the letter closes, Paul deals with a question which had been troubling some of the faithful, that of the resurrection. The great passage which he devotes to this subject is only difficult if we fail to see what Paul is trying to show. He is not arguing for the survival of the soul after death; hardly anyone in the ancient world denied that; he is concerned with the Christian form of that doctrine, the Resurrection of the Body. The discussion is in two parts.

I. The first is concerned with the fact of the resurrection; this is proved by the fact of the physical resurrection of Christ (xv. 1-19), by the thought of the final triumph of Christ, which involves His triumph over death (20-8), and by the very nature of the Christian life, which is based on the assumption of a resurrection (29-34).

II. The second part deals with the mode of the resurrection. We shall rise again with a body; a spirit cannot be naked, it must have a σῶμα, an organism by means of which to express itself; after the resurrection our organism will not be the body of this death, any more than the ripe ear of corn is the seed which was sown in the ground; but we shall still be we, the body will be our body,

and fitted to the circumstances of our new life. This requires a great change in our condition, and the change will be effected in the day of the Lord, when this mortal puts on immortality and death is swallowed up in life (34-58).

So this great letter ends; after a few details of less importance about his future plans, and commendations of his friends Timothy and Apollos, we come to the peaceful and affectionate conclusion, "my love to all of you in Christ Jesus" (xvi. 1-24).

Paul's confidence in the good sense and loyalty of the Corinthian Church was misplaced. The second letter was written nine months or a year after the first, and in that time many things had happened, and the state of the Church had in some ways gone from bad to worse. The events of the intervening months we can trace in some detail from allusions in 2 Corinthians and in the Acts. When 1 Corinthians was written, Paul was intending to visit Corinth shortly (1 Cor. xvi. 5-7); he was himself delayed, but sent Timothy ahead of him. It appears that Timothy brought back a very unfavourable report of the state of affairs, and Paul, fearing the worst, made a hurried visit to Corinth (2 Cor. xii. 14; xiii. 1: "This third time I am coming to you." So far we have heard of only one visit of Paul to Corinth, that during which he founded the Church, and it looks as though another visit not mentioned in Acts had taken place between 1 and 2 Corinthians). The party which defied the Apostle's authority was in the ascendancy; he left without effecting anything and heavy of heart, threatening that if he returned again he would not

spare (2 Cor. xiii. 2). After reaching Ephesus, he wrote a letter of great severity and sent it to the Church by the hand of Titus (2 Cor. ii. 4; vii. 8, 9: "Though I made you sorry with my letter"). This letter can hardly have been 1 Corinthians, which does not give the impression of having been written under the stress of great emotion. Most people think that it has been entirely lost, but some have made the interesting suggestion that 2 Cor. x.-xiii. are not part of that letter as originally written, but belong to the "severe letter." Such mistakes did occur sometimes, when two documents were written together on the same parchment or papyrus, and if both letters were kept in the archives of the Church of Corinth, we can understand such a mistake occurring through a copyist's stupidity. But this is no more than an interesting guess. What is certain is that Paul was very unhappy after the letter had been sent off. Had he been too severe with them? what would be the attitude of the Church, submissive or rebellious? About this time, Paul was forced to leave Ephesus (Acts xx. 1), and came to Troas; still Titus had not returned, and the anxiety of the Apostle was so great that he could not give his mind even to evangelistic work, but, leaving Troas, set out himself on the journey through Macedonia to Corinth (ii. 12, 13). At last Titus arrived, and brought with him a favourable report; the chief offender had been punished, the Church had returned to its obedience, the reputation of the Apostle had been completely cleared (vii. 3-10). In the sudden access of relief and joy consequent upon such favourable news, Paul sat down some-

where in Macedonia and poured out his heart in the letter we know as 2 Corinthians.

In some ways this Epistle is the hardest of all that Paul wrote. It is so closely bound up with events of which we have no clear knowledge, the pressure of emotion is so high, the transitions of the thought from the particular to the general and back again to the particular are so sudden, that often we are baffled to know what the Apostle really means. One of the dominant thoughts in his mind is that of Apostleship; his Apostleship had been called in question by some at Corinth, and though his authority was restored, he has very much to tell them about the true nature and purpose of Apostolic authority.

The first two chapters are taken up with introductory matter; the consolations of God experienced in the deliverance from great peril in Asia Minor, a review of his previous plans, an expression of the joy that came with the return of Titus. Then with the beginning of Chapter iii. we launch out on what is perhaps the most sustained piece of eloquence in the whole of Paul's writings; to be at all appreciated, this splendid passage must be read straight through, from the beginning of Chapter iii. to the end of Chapter vi. The Corinthians had criticised Paul for failing to show the marks of an Apostle; by these marks they understood what he would call fleshly advantages, the exercise of power, miraculous gifts and the seeing of visions; Paul uses every artifice of style, from bitter irony to the most tender pathos, to teach them that they were fundamentally wrong in their conception of an Apostle,

and that what they regarded as his weakness and his shame was in reality his glory and the seal of his ministry. He recurs to the subject again in Chapters x., xi. and xii.

First, the Corinthians were wrong in supposing that Apostleship had anything to do with a fair show in the flesh. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but are mighty" (x. 3-5). "We know no man after the flesh; though we have so known Christ, even Him we now know no more after the flesh" (v. 16). At one moment he begins to enumerate in irony his own advantages as an Israelite, but in a moment he breaks off into a description of the true Apostleship (xi. 22-33). Then they were wrong in supposing that mighty works and visions were an essential part of the Apostle's equipment; if they required them, Paul could show himself in these respects not a whit behind the "extremely-much Apostles" (xi. 5), but it is not on these that he will base any claim (xii. 5-12).

The mark of a true Apostle is weakness; that very quality in Paul which they had despised he will make his glory and his crown. It is astonishing how often this thought is repeated: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God" (iii. 5). "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (iv. 7), and when gold has been melted into an earthenware pot, it can only be got out again by the breaking of the pot. "We that live are daily delivered up to death for Jesus' sake . . . death worketh in us . . . our outward man is perishing" (iv. 11, 12, 16). The minister of the Gospel commends himself to

God by "tribulations, necessities, straitenings, stripes, imprisonments, distresses, labours, fastings, dishonour, death; as having nothing and yet possessing all things" (vi. 4-10). If Paul must boast, he will boast only of his weakness; he takes pleasure in weakness, insults, straitenings, persecutions; "for when I am weak then am I strong": of these weaknesses he gives a wonderful list; stoned, beaten, shipwrecked, in every kind of misery and hardship and distress by land and sea, overburdened with work and anxiety, and, what perhaps hurt his Roman pride more than anything, compelled to escape like a common criminal by night from the city of Damascus. Such according to Paul is the work of an Apostle, and most missionaries would endorse his view, in aspiration if not in fact.

The seal of this Apostleship is given in three ways. First, in a resolute and consistent holiness of life; "We have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in villainy" (iv. 2); "as of sincerity, as of God before God we walk in Christ" (ii. 17); "we make it our ambition to be well pleasing to Him" (v. 9). Second, in a manifestation of the power of God. "The weapons of our warfare are mighty" (x. 4). The ministry of the old law was glorious, how much more the ministry of the new covenant of reconciliation? (iii. 7-11). Paul glories in his weakness, only that the power of Christ may rest upon him; when he is weak, then he is strong (xii. 9, 10). It is the old paradox of the Cross, that out of the appearance of utter defeat, God brings the most glorious victory to pass. Third, Apostleship manifests itself in overflowing and

boundless love. In no Epistle is the attitude of Paul more tender towards those whom he has won for Christ. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (v. 14). "For ye are in our hearts both to live and die together" (vii. 3). "I will very gladly therefore spend and be spent for you. The more I love the less am I loved" (xii. 15).

Chapter vii. is taken up again with details of Paul's personal relations with the Church at Corinth, and to these he returns in Chapter xiii. The change of tone towards the end of the letter is very marked. It seems strange, after the warm expression of love and confidence which we find in the earlier chapters, to read in xii. 20: "I fear lest when I come, I may find you such as I would not desire you to be," and again in xiii. 10, "I write unto you in absence, that when I come I may not use severity, according to the authority which the Lord hath given me, to build up and not to cast down." It is this change of tone which has led some to suggest that 2 Corinthians x.-xiii. is part of the "severe letter" to which we have already made reference, and others to believe that while part of the Corinthian Church had submitted to Paul, there was still a section which remained obstinate in its wrong-doing. However this may be, the severity of the closing chapters is made more remarkable by the fact that, in the middle of the Epistle, Paul feels able to turn aside to a matter not immediately concerned with the problems in hand, and one which we should hardly expect him to discuss with a Church in whose loyalty he had little confidence. As we have had occasion to note more than once, the relations be-

tween the Jewish and Gentile wings of the Church were often very strained in the early days; and one of the great purposes of Paul's missionary life was to heal this division by a great contribution on the part of the Gentile Churches to the necessities of the poor saints at Jerusalem. The poverty of that Church may have been due to persecution, or merely the natural consequence of selling capital and using it as income (Acts iv. 32-7). But, in any case, Paul was right in feeling that the Church which had so generously given its leaders for the evangelisation of the Gentile world might reasonably look to the Gentile world for support. The two chapters in which he deals with this theme appear to us the least interesting in the letter, and are a little difficult to follow. But it is Paul's habit to scatter gems in the most unlikely places; and, if we missed out these chapters, we should lose the enunciation of the great principle of all Christian service, that "if willingness is present, a man is acceptable according as he has and not according as he has not" (viii. 12), the beautiful recollection of those people who gave "not as we had hoped, but first gave themselves unto the Lord" (viii. 5), the only people from whom a missionary ever wanted a subscription; and the great saying about "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor" (viii. 9).

This great and rich Epistle closes on a peaceful note, with words which have become the classical form of Christian dismissal: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all" (xiii. 14).

4. *The Epistle to the Galatians*

The short letter to the Galatians gives rise to some of the most tangled and thorny questions which we meet in the whole study of the New Testament; that they are questions of historical fact and not of religious truth does not absolve us from an attempt to face them; and seeing that the accuracy of the Acts and of Paul himself are seriously at stake, the issue cannot be dismissed as unimportant. The first question is, "Who were the Galatians?" This letter was not written to a single Church, but to scattered Churches in Asia Minor. The older view was that they were the people of the great mountain plain of the centre of Asia Minor, Galatians by race, and it was supposed that Paul might have preached to them in the uncertain wanderings of his second missionary tour which ultimately brought him to Troas (Acts xvi. 6-10). But many scholars now believe that the people addressed were not Galatians by race, but simply through the fact that they lived in the Roman province of Galatia; it would then be possible to identify them with the inhabitants of those Galatian cities, Derbe and Lystra, which Paul had visited on his first journey (Acts xiv. 1-23). In view of the fact that Paul went to "Galatia" to preach because of illness (Gal. iv. 13), these cities seem a much more probable field for his activities than the bleak wind-swept plateau of the other view.

The circumstance of the letter are in general outline clear. It arose from that great conflict

over the free admission of the Gentiles to the Church, which we have already in our study encountered more than once; in that conflict, Paul played a heroic part, and the marks of it run like a scarlet thread through all his writings. Jewish Christian envoys had come among the Galatians and disturbed their faith; they had cast doubt on the Apostleship of Paul, and assured these new Christians that, unless they kept the whole Jewish Law, they could not be saved. The Galatians were beginning to waver and turn away from the simplicity of the Gospel to the legal elaborateness of the Jewish party, and Paul, feeling, not without reason, the whole of his work to be in danger, hurled at them this most fiery and controversial of all his writings.

His first purpose is to prove his Apostleship and the rightness of his Gospel by showing that they had been accepted and ratified by the heads of the Jerusalem Church, the leaders of that very party which was now trying to undo his work; this he does by means of a sketch of his own career. Here we meet with the second great difficulty; it seems as though Paul contradicts Acts, and it is not easy to reconcile the two accounts of the visits made by Paul to Jerusalem. While he speaks of his conversion and work in Arabia (i. 17), we are on safe ground, but after that all becomes confused. If Galatians was written after the second missionary journey, one of the visits to Jerusalem mentioned by Paul must be that recorded in Acts xv. But that is the third visit mentioned in the Acts, and Paul here most emphatically states that he had been

in Jerusalem only twice. The key fact in the situation is that Paul does not mention the Council at Jerusalem at which the matter of the Gentiles was settled (Acts xv.). The simplest explanation is that when Galatians was written, the Council had not yet happened; if it were already over, Paul had to his hand the very weapon which he needed in order to strengthen the Galatians; the Jewish Church in full council had made their position unassailable, and Paul could hardly have failed to mention an event of such importance. If this view be tenable, then Paul must have written the Galatian letter from Antioch between his first and second missionary journeys, probably in the year A.D. 49. Already while he is "on furlough," trouble has broken out in the newly-founded Churches, and Paul hastens to write and strengthen his converts, before going up to Jerusalem to lay their case before the Council, which was on the point of being held. If this be so, all is clear. The two visits of Paul to Jerusalem are those recorded in Acts ix. 26-30 and xi. 30, xii. 25, and Galatians would thus become the earliest of all the New Testament writings.[1]

Its main argument is clear. Paul's Apostolic authority has been impugned. He opens the letter by making it clear that his authority rests on no human commission and that there can be no other Gospel than that which he preaches (i. 1, 7-10). But he goes on to strengthen his position by showing

[1] For the reason stated in the preface, I have given only one view, that which alone seems to me tenable; for the full intricacies of the problem, the reader must go to Lightfoot or Ramsay.

that this had been recognised and endorsed by the Jerusalem Church. The Apostles of the Jews, so far from condemning his preaching, had added nothing to it, but had given it their warm approval (ii. 6-10). When Peter at Antioch had moved away from the ground taken up by the others, Paul had successfully resisted him (ii. 11-14). Now the essence of Paul's Gospel was this; that a man's acceptance before God depends not on virtuous keeping of any law, but simply on a living faith in Jesus Christ. Any returning from that faith to the observance of the law is a turning back from the clear light of day to the obscurity of twilight.

The rest of the Epistle is a series of variations on this theme. Paul has recourse to every kind of argument to convince his readers. He reminds them of the power which attended their first acceptance of Christ and guaranteed the truth of his Gospel (iii. 1-7), of their devotion to himself, when he preached among them in weakness (iv. 12-20); he puts the Law in its right relation to the Gospel and proves the priority of faith to works by dwelling on the faith of Abraham, to whom the promises were given long before the Law (iii. 8-14), by the analogy of a will which cannot be altered once it has been ratified (iii. 15), by a verbal argument from the use of the word "seed" in the singular number in Gen. xiii. (iii. 16-22), by the analogy of the boy under the care of his slave-tutor, contrasted with the liberty of his manhood (iii. 23-iv. 11), by an allegory from the two sons of Abraham (iv. 21-31). Then he turns from argument to passionate entreaty; "ye did run well; liberty is our right, the Spirit is

the principle of our new life; fulfil not the old deeds of your heathen days, but go on to the fulfilment of the holiness which is the outcome of true faith" (v. 2-26). The last chapter opens with a few practical words of advice, and then Paul takes the almost completed letter from the hands of the scribe who has been writing at his dictation, and appends in the large writing of a short-sighted man (if that be the meaning of πηλίκοις γράμμασιν), an earnest summary of what has gone before.

It might be thought that a letter which springs out of such special circumstances, and out of the heats of a long past controversy, would have little to say to us to-day. But it is because the New Testament books so exactly fitted the needs of those for whom they were written that they speak so clearly to later generations; they are no mere manuals of theology, but living voices. The first message of the Epistle is on the subject of faith. About half the disasters which have befallen the Church have been due to a misunderstanding of the Pauline doctrine of faith; it is therefore important to see exactly what the Apostle meant by it. All the passages in the Epistle where the word occurs should be carefully collected and studied; it will be found that to Paul faith is no mere intellectual assent, but an act of the whole man, including the consecration of the will and the devotion of the life. But that will not exhaust the teaching of this little book; we find here some great words about the work of our Lord (i. 4; iii. 13; iv. 4), deep thoughts about the sonship of the Christian and his life in Christ (ii. 19, 20; iii. 26-8), one of the

sublimest expressions of the love of the Christian teacher for his flock (iv. 19), and some very important teaching about the work of the Holy Ghost, culminating in the great passage on the fruits of the Spirit (v. 22-4), which serves as a standard and an ideal for the whole Christian life.

But most important of all, perhaps, is that ideal of Christian liberty, which is the pedal-note all through the Epistle. It is hard for "born-Christians" to understand the weight of the burden from which Christ has freed us, the burden of the Law with its endless enactments and the heart-rending certainty of never being able to fulfil them all. Those who have come newly out of heathen religions can understand better, and are less in danger of going back from liberty. But for us who are in perpetual danger of being ensnared again by the tyranny of forms and observances and conventions, the message of Galatians comes as fresh as the day it was written, that the Christian life means nothing less than living contact with the living Christ and the transformation of life through Him. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."[1]

[1] We meet here the first in order and in date of the great Cambridge commentaries on the Epistles. Lightfoot, on the Galatians, though not containing that great scholar's best work, is a monument of sound and thoughtful learning. Lightfoot takes the "North-Galatian" view; the champion of the South-Galatian theory is Sir W. M. Ramsay, whose *Historical Commentary on the Galatians* will well repay study.

5. *The Letters to the Thessalonians*

Paul's letters fall into two clearly marked divisions, according as they were written before or after the beginning of his captivity at Rome. Since it is convenient to treat the Captivity Epistles together, we may depart at this point from the order of our printed Bibles, and deal with the Thessalonian Epistles, which are among the earliest, if not the earliest, of the New Testament writings.

Thessalonica was then as now an important port; it had been founded four hundred years earlier, and its position on trade-routes both by land and sea gave it from the beginning a prosperity which steadily increased under Roman dominion. It was natural that Paul and his companions, after their hard usage at Philippi (Acts xvi. 19-40), should have made this the next stopping-place on their journey southward. From the very short account of their stay which is given in Acts xvii. 1-9, we learn that the Thessalonian Church had a leavening of Jews, but was mainly composed of those "God-fearers," Gentiles half-attached to the worship of the synagogue and the Jewish faith, whom we have previously encountered in the person of Cornelius; that it was a small Church, and that it grew up in circumstances of hardship and persecution. All these indications are confirmed by Paul's Epistles, with one exception—that Luke mentions only a period of three weeks in connection with the Apostles' stay, and the letters make it clear that the whole period of their work must have been considerably longer.

It was only a few months after the end of his visit when the Apostle had occasion to write these letters, and only a few weeks can have intervened between the composition of the first and that of the second. Paul was accompanied by his friends, Silvanus and Timotheus (1 Thess. i. 1 ; 2 Thess. i. 1), and he was probably writing from Corinth, where Silvanus and Timotheus had rejoined him, having prolonged their stay in Berœa after the expulsion of the Apostle (Acts xviii. 5).

There is very little theology in these letters ; the greater part of them is taken up with private affairs. We might take as the motto of the two together the words " now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord " (1 Thess. iii. 8).

The teaching of the first Epistle may be grouped round three thoughts.

I. The affection of the Apostle for his readers. This is so spontaneous and overflowing that he keeps on recurring to it, even when he has said all that the occasion can be supposed to demand. Read especially ii. 1-12 (note 8, " we were willing to give you not only the Gospel of Christ but our own souls also "), where Paul has given a perfect picture of the Christian worker with his seven-fold equipment of holiness, humility, sincerity, faithfulness, self-sacrifice, gentleness and love. The thought is developed in ii. 17-20 and iii. 7-10.

II. The fact and the necessity of tribulation in the life of the Church. The Apostles had had experience of it themselves in Thessalonica, and the

Jews, who had been their antagonists, and were rapidly "filling up the measure of their sin," had now turned their resentment against the little Church. "When we were with you, we warned you that we shall suffer tribulation, as it came to pass, and as ye know" (iii. 4; compare ii. 14-16).

III. The staunchness and devotion of the Thessalonian Christians. Of all Paul's converts, with the possible exception of the Philippians, these caused him least trouble and most joy. Their example had proved a great power for good in all Macedonia (i. 7-10), their faith and love had been a consolation to the Apostle in his trials (iii. 6, 7), his prayer for them is only that they may be led on further in the way in which they were going (iii. 11-13).

There are just one or two points on which they need to be set right. In the horribly wicked environment of a Greek city, sexual matters must always have had an undesirable prominence; and Paul has need to remind them of the Christian ideal of holiness and purity (iv. 1-9). But the greater part of their difficulties are covered by the clumsy words "eschatological expectation." This may be a convenient place at which to stop and say what must be said on this important subject.[1] "Eschatology" deals with the last things, resurrection, judgment and the end of the world. There is no book in the New Testament from which it is wholly absent, and though the subject is generally very gingerly

[1] Compare the section on the Gospel according to St Matthew iv. § 2.

handled by Christian teachers, it is impossible to exclude it either from the New Testament, or from a resolute determination to face the whole of the Christian faith. It is perfectly clear that the earliest disciples thought that the history of the Church would be very brief, and that the Lord would soon return in glory to take the kingship of the world. Though there are utterances of the Lord which imply a longer period in between His two advents, it is equally clear that the "Advent hope," as it has been called, has the authority of the Lord Himself; attempts to remove this element from His teaching have proved wholly unsuccessful. At times in the Church's history, this hope has been bright and confident, and again, when the Church has become concerned with the affairs of this life, it has grown very dim. At the present time, when people say in Church Sunday by Sunday "and He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead," they have no idea at all what the words mean. Yet the belief in a personal return of Christ to this earth always has been and still is an integral article of the Christian faith.

That there are dangers in such a belief is obvious. Two had beset the Church in Thessalonica; first, that certain men, expecting that the Lord would immediately appear, could not be troubled with ordinary business, and were creating a scandal in the Church. Paul's advice to them is short and very much to the point: "make it your aim to be quiet and to mind your own business, and work with your hands" (iv. 11). Then there had been unwise teaching about the dead; in the brief

period since Paul had been with them, some of the Christians had died, and those who were left were anxious about them. Paul, who gives it as a summary of their faith that they had "turned from idols to serve the living God and to wait for His Son from Heaven" (i. 9, 10), naturally turns their thoughts to the hope of the end. He avoids all vain speculations as to times and seasons, and simply leaves the Thessalonians with two thoughts, which are valid for all, whatever the details of their views about the Second Coming; first, that our dead are perfectly safe in the keeping of their Lord; and second, that howsoever and wheresoever He comes, and however long that coming be delayed, we are to live as though in immediate expectation of it, not entangled with the affairs of this world, but ready at any moment to "slip our cable and depart" (iv. 13-v. 11).

Scarcely had Paul finished his first letter, with a brief summary in short, pithy sayings of the Christian way of life (v. 12-28), when he was called to take up his pen again and write another letter. The trouble in the Church had grown worse and had been fostered, it appears, by a forged letter purporting to come from the Apostle himself (ii. 2); men had been saying that the resurrection was already past, and disturbing the minds of the simple. Once again, therefore, Paul has to deal with the "last things." This time the emphasis is all on the side of judgment, a side of truth on which we are not fond of dwelling; the evil in the world is to culminate in the appearance of a "man of lawlessness," who opposes himself to all goodness and to God,

and who is only destroyed by the appearing of Christ Himself. This is all very difficult and mysterious; some people think that Paul had in mind no more than the persecuting Roman Empire; others that he is speaking of some power of evil not yet revealed.

We are on easier ground in the other part of the letter, where the note is mostly one of confidence and hope, and of which the motto is "stand fast." Paul thanks God that his friends have stood fast in persecution (i. 3, 4), urges them not to be shaken by any false teaching or by any opposition of evil (ii. 1-3, 15); he prays that God will establish them (ii. 17), and thanks God in anticipation in the certainty that He will do so (iii. 3).

Further directions are given about those who will not work, and with greater stringency; here the command is "if any man will not work neither shall he eat" (iii. 10). At iii. 17, Paul literally takes up the pen from the friend to whom he has been dictating, and adds a little note to guarantee the genuineness of the letter; and with his greeting, those early Thessalonian Christians pass out of our knowledge.

6. *Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon*

The Epistle to the Romans was written just before Paul left Corinth on his fatal journey to Jerusalem. That journey resulted in his arrest, several trials and a long imprisonment at Cæsarea, and finally in his being transferred to Rome. In all probability nothing has been preserved to us of the

writings of Paul during the Cæsarean years,[1] but we have a most important second group of letters written out of the sorrows and experiences of his Roman captivity. Of these the earliest is the Epistle to the Colossians.

Of all Paul's missionary ventures, none was more fruitful in results than that which had been carried out with Ephesus as its centre (Acts xix. 10). In two years, the whole Roman province of Asia, that is, the central part of the west coast of Asia Minor, had been evangelised; naturally Paul did not do all the preaching himself; his headquarters were at Ephesus, and he sent out his helpers into all the country round about. Among the out-stations of the Ephesian mission was the important town of Colossæ on the river Lycus; the Church there had been founded by Paul's friend Epaphras, whom we meet in this group of Epistles only, but whom we can see even from what little is said here to have been a man of great devotion and beauty of character. Though Paul had never in person visited the Church at Colossæ, it was natural that it should be bound to him by very close ties of affection and loyalty (Col. ii. 1), and when news reached Paul in his Roman prison that the peace of the Church had been troubled by false teachers, he had no hesitation in writing to put them on the right road again and to strengthen their faith.

We can only infer the character and doctrines of the false teachers from the errors which Paul seems

[1] Some scholars attribute to that period one or more of the Captivity Epistles, which I have grouped together as having been written from Rome.

anxious to combat in the Epistle itself; apparently they were the forerunners of those who in after times were called Gnostics, and they seem to have introduced an error in doctrine and an error of practice. The key-verse of this part of the Epistle is ii. 8: "beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit." The thinkers of Greece were very much puzzled to know how there could be any contact between God, who is Spirit and pure, and this world of sense and matter, which they regarded as base and corrupt. The Christian doctrine of creation was to them repellent, and to bridge over the gap between God and His world they invented a series of lesser powers, angelic and so forth, with Christ at their head, each being a little lower than the last, until at last a power was reached low enough to have contact with the world; this series of intervening powers was called by the Greek word "Pleroma," which means "filling up." The doctrinal error which resulted was that Christ was dragged down from His true position to the mere headship of a group of nearly equal powers; in practice, the heresy worked itself out in the worship of angelic powers (ii. 18), in a scrupulous and careful observance of holy days (ii. 16, 17), and in an asceticism which hurt the body for the good of the soul (ii. 23).

The true method for the overcoming of error is not argument, but methodical and exact presentation of the truth. Paul does not attempt to confute the false teachers, he answers their error of doctrine by the fullest statement he has left us of his beliefs as to the person and nature of Christ. It is sometimes

maintained that Paul does not teach the Deity of Christ, and it is true that the passages in which he *directly* speaks of Christ as God are very few, and of doubtful interpretation.[1] But an honest reading of the first chapter of this Epistle hardly leaves a doubt as to his real meaning. "What need," he asks, "of all this elaborate pleroma? In Christ the gap between God and man is perfectly bridged" (ii. 9). He dwells on the glory of Christ in three aspects: first, as He was from eternity, before He became man for us men and for our salvation (i. 13-15); secondly, in His redemptive work of winning man back to God by His death (i. 14, 21-2; ii. 13-15); thirdly, in His risen majesty as head of that mystery the Church, which has now been revealed as destined to include all men, both Jews and Gentiles alike (i. 27; iii. 10, 11), and as giver of all that the Colossians need for their new and Christian life (i. 9-12; ii. 9-12).

A religion which has a low moral standard can point with satisfaction to the fulfilment by its adherents of its demands; where, as in the religion of Christ, the standard is perfection, performance always lags far behind belief, and the perpetual problem of the Church in every age is the Christianising of all the relations of personal and social life. In some few respects, the Christian ideal has permeated society, at least in the recognition of certain things as wrong, and it is not easy for us to realise the sheer revolution in thought and practice

[1] See on this whole question the most judicious discussion of Rom. ix. 5, by Sanday and Headlam in their *Commentary on the Romans*.

which the Christian revelation demands of those who come to it without the mediating influence of a half-Christian civilisation. Paul overcomes the Colossian errors of practice by a picture of the Christian life as it ought to be. It is no matter of ritual observances and external prohibitions; those have their use, but will pass away with those temporal things which they concern (ii. 20-3). The life of the Christian is an entry into the eternal sphere, a new life like the life of Christ after His resurrection (iii. 1-4). Its results must be, for the individual, purity of life (iii. 5-10), gentleness, joy, thankfulness, and all the other specifically Christian virtues (iii. 12-17); for the community it must mean the purifying of all the relationships of daily life; husbands and wives, parents and children, servants and masters are to be bound together in a new fellowship of mutual respect and service (iii. 18-iv. 1).

The letter throughout is very personal in tone; though Paul has never seen the readers, he feels that they are really his children in Christ. He wrestles on their behalf, so he tells them (ii. 1), he delights in his sufferings on their account (i. 24), he asks their prayers (iv. 2-3), and sends Tychicus to give them information about his doings (iv. 7-9). The greetings at the end of the Epistle are very interesting; we meet several old friends; here is Mark, apparently quite reconciled with Paul after the difficulties recorded in Acts xv. 38; and Luke, perhaps in medical attendance on Paul, and Epaphras the Apostle of the Colossians; and Onesimus, of whom there is more to be said, and Demas, who was afterwards lured away by the pride of life

(2 Tim. iv. 10), and others whom we do not meet again.

In contrast with this, the impersonal character of Ephesians is very marked, especially seeing that the Church at Ephesus was well known to Paul and dearly loved by him. No friend joins with him in writing the letter, and there is no single word of personal greeting at the end. It is interesting to find that in i. 1, two of our best manuscripts leave out the words "in Ephesus," and the suggestion has been made with great probability that the letter is really a pastoral letter to all the Churches of the neighbourhood; it happened that the copy which went to Ephesus was preserved, and so the Epistle became known as that to the Ephesians. Paul had been thinking deeply over the problems dealt with in the Colossian letter; the whole of Asia Minor was affected or in danger of being affected by the new teaching, and accordingly he writes with greater care and elaboration to all the Churches of the district to give them certainty and guidance in the matters under discussion. The letter is calmer, fuller, more theological than that to the Colossians. "The difference between Colossians and Ephesians is that between the Gloria in Excelsis and the Nicene Creed; one is poetry, theology in the making, the other is prose, theology completed."

To understand the argument at all, it is necessary to read the first three chapters without a pause. They are not easy chapters, partly because Paul writes such very long sentences, indeed, the first three chapters really are one sentence, partly because of the tortuous way in which he keeps doubling

back upon his own thought, developing something previously hinted at, branching out in new directions as he goes along. His mind is so full of great thoughts that the words come rushing tumultuously, as if he could not altogether control them.

He begins as usual with thanksgiving, thanksgiving for the spiritual blessings which we have received in Christ. These blessings are fourfold :

I. God's choice of us before the foundation of the world.

II. Our redemption by the blood of Christ.

III. The gift of spiritual knowledge and understanding.

IV. The gift of the Holy Spirit.

But in one portentous sentence (i. 2-14), he finds room to speak of almost everything which is included in the compass of God's plan of salvation.

At i. 15, thanksgiving changes to prayer, but the prayer is not fully expressed till iii. 14 ; all that comes between is a vast breathless parenthesis, in which Paul leaps from point to point, touching shortly on great themes in language not unworthy of them. He begins calmly enough ; what he is going to pray for is that his converts may be given knowledge (i. 17) ; the false teachers had offered them a spurious wisdom of heathen philosophy ; he prays that they may be given that true understanding of the mystery of Christ which he claims to possess himself. But almost at once, a mention of the power of God sets

him thinking of that power at work in the resurrection of Christ, and this leads him on to the thoughts which we have already found expressed in Colossians, of the majesty and splendour of the risen Christ (i. 19-23), and of the wonder of His work of redemption, by which his readers had been brought from death to life (ii. 1-10). Then another digression (i. 22); "Christ is the head of the Church," and at once Paul's mind is filled with the thought of the great universal Church, which had grown out of the narrow ways of Judaism; formerly there had been enmity between the privileged nation and the Gentiles outside; now for both, there is one and the same way of access to God, the way of the Cross of Christ; in that Cross, enmity has been done away, and Jew and Gentile have been made one (ii. 11-22). Once again he tries to find utterance in prayer, and once again he turns aside. A universal Church, Jew and Gentile together. This had been all along the eternal purpose of God hidden through all ages, and now at last discovered in the very generation in which they were then living, and to him, Paul, less than the least of the Apostles, had been given the privilege of receiving the revelation and proclaiming the fulness of the divine purpose (iii. 1-14).

At last the prayer comes, and it has been worth waiting for. Every one of its five clauses should be carefully weighed. They hold out an almost incredible standard of Christian experience. Is it that Paul has outsoared reality, or is his prayer really possible of fulfilment in the lives of ordinary people? Once again we meet that difficult phrase

" pleroma " ; what does it mean, " filled up unto all the filling up of God " ? It seems to suggest that there is something lacking to God, that without the inclusion of us men in His purposes, there must always remain an unfulfilled desire in His heart. No wonder that Paul ends this part of his letter with an outburst of praise and thanksgiving to God, who does exceeding abundantly above the desires and thoughts of men (iii. 20-1).

We now expect the practical part of the letter, and, indeed, Paul begins it, bidding his readers walk worthily of so wonderful a vocation ; but that great idea of the Church, " the mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people," once more fires his mind ; he pauses to dwell lovingly on its oneness, not the oneness of monotony, but of a divinely ordered variety, in which each has something to contribute ; " that we may all come unto a unity of faith " ; unity is the goal, not the condition of the Church's life, " to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ " ; no one of us can ever reach that stature or reproduce that fulness, but by the contribution which each in his due measure is fitted to make, we may build up a Church which will be evermore perfectly the image of its divine Founder and Head (iv. 1-16).

Now the stage is at last clear for the practical instructions ; these follow very much on the lines of Colossians, but at greater length. Paul is at pains to emphasise the truth, sometimes forgotten even now, that to be a Christian means to be good ; this is the heart of the difference between the old ungoverned life of heathen days and the discipline

and duty of the new life in Christ (iv. 17-19; v. 8, 9, 15); the distinguishing marks of a Christian are to be purity, truthfulness, gentleness, sobriety and forgivingness. Then the same teaching as to the relationships of the family and household; whereupon once more the leading idea of the Church breaks in; before, it was the picture of the Head and the body; here the love of husband and wife is used to show us the mutual love of Christ and His Church (v. 29-32).

Of the famous simile of the whole armour of God there is no need to speak in detail. Paul is fond of these illustrations from daily life; we have had the operation of grafting in Rom. xi. 17-24, the race-course in 1 Cor. ix. 24, the making of a will in Gal. iii. 15. The sight of a Roman legionary in full armour must have been quite familiar to Paul's Asian readers; and though soldiers no longer wear armour, pictures from battle still have a stern suggestiveness for us; those who have even a little experience of the inner conflict find no difficulty in understanding this picture of the warrior of God going out to withstand all the spiritual enemies that beset his path.

With these great letters, we may conveniently treat the little note to Philemon. Paul must have written many such private letters, and we cannot but feel very grateful that this exquisite specimen has been preserved for us. Philemon was a gentleman of Colossæ, and the letter is about a slave of Philemon, named Onesimus, who had run away from his master, had met Paul in Rome and had turned to Christ. If the subscription to the letter has any

foundation in fact,[1] the letter was actually written by the hand of Onesimus himself. Paul decided perfectly fairly between master and servant; the runaway Onesimus must return to his master; but Philemon must receive him now not merely as a servant, but as a beloved brother in Christ. Any loss that Philemon has incurred Paul will cover himself.

This letter is a faithful picture of the way in which the Church dealt with the great abuses of the ancient world. Without fuss or political agitation, the love of Christ in master and servant drew the sting of slavery; it ceased to be a hard and cruel thing, and gradually it died out altogether in the Christian Church. Perhaps the letter is no untrue picture of the way in which God deals with His runaways.

Note to Section 6

Ephesians has been the subject of a fine commentary by Dr Armitage Robinson, the Dean of Wells; this is prefaced by a plain exposition (also printed separately), which is invaluable to the English reader. For Colossians and Philemon, we have the work of Lightfoot; the chapter on the Heresy of the Colossians has become classical. Simple, suggestive, and spiritual are Bishop Moule's *Ephesian Studies* and *Colossian Studies*.

[1] The subscriptions printed in small type in the Authorised Version are not part of the original Epistles. They were added probably in the second century by editors and scribes.

7. *Philippians*

The Church at Philippi was, perhaps, Paul's favourite among all his Churches; most of the others had caused him at one time or another deep anxiety and distress; of the Philippians he had had nothing but comfort. The Church in that city had been founded in a time of great distress and hardship (Acts xvi. 16-40); but Lydia and the jailer were only the beginning of a Church, which, under the care, as we have suggested, of Paul's friend and companion Luke, grew and prospered exceedingly. Paul was not in the habit of living at the expense of his converts, but in the case of the Philippians he had made an exception and accepted their gifts; twice already they had contributed to his necessities, and now a third gift was the occasion of this letter (iv. 14-16).

Unexpectedly the keynote of the Epistle is joy. The Apostle was a bound prisoner, surrounded by trials of every kind. He feels that he is being poured out in sacrifice (ii. 17); there are some in Rome who distress him by preaching Christ not sincerely but contentiously (i. 15-17); of others he must speak even with tears because of their worldliness and wickedness (iii. 17-19); even in the beloved Church to which he is writing, there are divisions and vainglories (ii. 2), and two ladies named Euodia and Syntyche have to be bidden to keep the peace (iv. 2).

But through it all, the Apostle's faith rises triumphant and he sounds over and over again the

note of joy even in the face of death. "In this I rejoice, yea and I shall rejoice" (i. 17-18), "I rejoice and rejoice with all of you" (ii. 17), "Rejoice in the Lord" (iii. 1), "Rejoice in the Lord alway and again I say rejoice" (iv. 4).

A study of this Epistle resolves itself almost into a study of the causes of the Apostle's joy. First, he mentions his joy in his converts, for whom he longs, in whose fellowship in the Gospel he delights, and for whose further progress he prays (i. 3-11). Then there is the sense of God's protecting care over him; his imprisonment had seemed for the moment to be the end of his missionary labours, but, as it turned out, it had all been for the furtherance of the Gospel, even in the Prætorium, and for the encouragement of Christ's followers (i. 12-14). Then there had been the problem of his poverty, and just at the right moment the kindness of an unforgetting heavenly Father had supplied his wants through the Philippians; out of his own constant experience, he can tell them that if they really trust in God and tell Him of their needs, they may rest in perfect confidence and security (iv. 6-7), because God will supply all that they need (iv. 19). Even the contentious preachers he makes into a cause for joy, since by their means in one way or another Christ is being preached, and that is his greatest care (i. 18).

But these reasons are all near the surface of life; there are others which go a great deal deeper into the heart of things. One of the most important passages in the whole of the New Testament is the second chapter of this Epistle, and of that great passage the most important word is the word "therefore"

in v. 9. This is the method of God, glory out of humiliation; because Christ humbled Himself to death, even the death of the Cross, taking on Him the form of a servant, *therefore* God has highly exalted Him and given Him supreme honour and glory. This, says Paul, is the principle of the Christian life; if his converts are to shine as constellations, as luminaries in the world, they must walk by this rule, must have the mind of Christ. After this pattern, Paul has tried to fashion his own life; giving up race and religion and all the things that were gain to him, taking as his example the death of Christ, that he may win the resurrection from the dead. Not that he has himself reached perfection; all life is to him a perpetual and passionate striving onward and upward towards a goal as yet unattained (iii. 7-14).

There is yet one other ground of confidence; our life is now not merely of the earth, it has also a heavenly aspect; for the heavenly to obtain complete dominion over the earthly, our whole state must undergo a great change, a transformation, which will only be effected when Christ comes again to perfect the work of redemption (iii. 20, 21). With this in mind, he bids the brethren, whom once again he calls his joy and crown, to stand fast (iv. 1).

Christianity is the only religion which has made hope a virtue. In this Epistle we see the reason. For, in prison and poverty and loneliness, the Christian Apostle has the certainty that God is on his side, that by strange ways He brings His sons to glory, and that at the last He is bound to be victorious. This letter, written by Paul in the hours

of his darkness and under the shadow of impending death, has been an encouragement to thousands of his fellow-servants who have been called upon to "fill up in their bodies that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ."

8. *The Pastoral Epistles*

At the close of the collection of Pauline letters stands a group of three Epistles addressed to individuals and closely connected together. These are usually grouped together under the general title of the Pastoral Epistles. In dealing with them we are face to face with one of the unsolved problems of New Testament scholarship. At one time or another, the Pauline authorship of every single Epistle has been called in question; as criticism has grown more rational, the pendulum has swung a long distance in the other direction, and all the great Epistles are now accepted as Pauline almost without question. But in the case of the Pastorals, agreement has not been by any means reached in the world of scholarship.

It is worth while to review briefly the arguments on which the authenticity of these Epistles has been doubted.

I. It is undeniable that the letters differ very considerably in style from the other Pauline letters; there are very many words which do not occur elsewhere in the New Testament,[1] and there are

[1] According to Dr Thayer's list, 168 in fifteen chapters, a very striking figure.

decided differences in phrasing; for example, the expression, so common in these Epistles, "God our Saviour" does not occur elsewhere in Paul. This can only be fully appreciated in the Greek, but even the English gives the impression of a difference of style.

II. Almost all the other Epistles can be dated with some degree of accuracy, that is, arise out of circumstances with which we are familiar, or which we can reconstruct from the letters themselves. These letters do not seem to fit in with any period of Paul's life, unless they all belong, as 2 Timothy implies, to the period between the first and second trials of the Apostle in Rome, a period of which we have no other record.

III. These letters seem to reflect a condition of Church life more advanced than anything with which we are familiar in the other parts of the New Testament, and it is argued that we must allow a considerable time for this development to have taken place. One notable difference is in the use of the word "faith"; here it seems to be less the adventurous faith of Romans and Galatians than adherence to an established body of doctrine.

On these grounds, many scholars feel unable to accept the Pauline authorship of the letters; others have maintained that there is in them a part which is Pauline, but that it has become mixed up with other matter. Such accidents did happen to ancient documents, but the separating out of the different threads is a task of extreme difficulty, and one which

is rarely, if ever, accompanied with complete success. It cannot be denied that these are strong arguments ; much less can it be maintained that they are decisive ; on the other side it may be argued :

I. That writers constantly write different styles at different times, being affected by subject, circumstances, and even by the books they have themselves been recently reading.

II. That the concluding years of Paul's life are hidden in uncertainty and that there is, at least, a probability that after his release from his first captivity he enjoyed a considerable period of activity before he was again arrested and began the imprisonment which ended only with his death.

III. That a Church, as is shown both by missionary experience and by the growth of modern heresies, develops very rapidly, and we cannot lay down by any arbitrary laws either the rate or the lines of its development.

For those who take their stand on tradition and authority, that is, those who regard as all-important the fact that the Church has in all ages accepted these Epistles as inspired Scripture and has thereby guaranteed their Pauline authorship, the matter is settled ; they need look no further. Nor must it be pretended that this is an argument of no force ; if these Epistles are not Pauline, they are in plain language a forgery ; and though the ancient ideas of ownership in books were very different from ours, we must thoroughly face the consequences for

our belief in the divine guidance of the Church of the rejection of any of the New Testament books. But even if we take our stand purely on the basis of evidence and scholarship, we may still assert that the burden of proof is with those who deny the Pauline authorship, and we may hold that until they produce something more decisive in the way of proof, the most reasonable position to hold is that of the Pauline authorship. It is to be remembered that the latest English editor of the Epistles, Dr Parry, has declared in favour of the authenticity of all three Epistles. To his elaborate introduction, since these matters, though interesting to the expert, are weariness to those who are not scholars, those desirous of further information must be referred.[1]

The three letters are closely connected and share many common characteristics; but before considering these, we must turn shortly to each individual letter, and attempt to find out what are its peculiarities and special character.

1 *Timothy*

Timotheus, to give him his real name, was one of the most faithful of the companions of the great Apostle. Of his early career we can learn something

[1] The external evidence for these Epistles is singularly strong; one or more are quoted by six distinct authorities before the end of the second century. Great weight must be allowed to the considered judgment of Dr Hort: "In spite of by no means trivial difficulties arising from comparison of the diction of these with other Epistles, I believe them to be his (Paul's), and to be his as they now stand."

from Acts xvi. 1-8, and he reappears from time to time in the New Testament; we may recall that he was joint author of several of Paul's letters (2 Cor., Phil., Col., 1 and 2 Thess.). It appears that this letter was written to him at the time of his appointment to special and independent authority; not as Bishop, for it was part of his work to appoint Bishops (iii. 1), but rather as possessing Apostolic authority; Paul, being prevented from exercising in person his Apostolic oversight of the Churches, appoints Timotheus to act as his deputy; apparently Timotheus was considered young for the work[1] (iv. 12), and it seems from the tone of the letters that he found it difficult. Paul writes to him in warning, encouragement and advice. The advice may be classified as follows:

I. Some is for Timotheus himself; and ranges from such details as that he is to drink a little wine for his stomach's sake (v. 23) and that he is not to speak roughly to (I half believe the verb retains its original meaning of "strike") an elder (v. 1), to general principles, such as, that he is to follow after "righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, forbearance" (vi. 11). Some have found this strange advice to give to a leader in the Church, but Paul knew all too well that the burden of administration and the adulation consequent on a great office cut at the very root of the spiritual life of the most experienced Christians.

[1] If fifteen years had elapsed since his conversion and call, he might be still under thirty-five, which is considered young for a Bishop even to-day.

II. Then there are instructions as to various ecclesiastical personages, the character which is to be required of them, and the treatment they may expect to receive; under these are included bishops (iii. 2-7), deacons (iii. 8-10), and widows (v. 3-10).

III. Finally, there are general instructions relating to the life of the Christian Church, as, for example, about the offering of prayer (ii. 1-8).

2 Timothy

This exquisite letter stands midway between the general body of the Pauline Epistles and 1 Timothy and Titus; its Pauline character can hardly be questioned by any who have really entered into the mind of the Apostle, and, on the other hand, it shares many of the characteristics common to the Pastorals, and thereby goes far to guarantee the authenticity of the other two. It is the last letter which we have from the hand of Paul; written from his second imprisonment, it bears on it the shadow of the consciousness of imminent death. He feels that his own time is over. "I have fought the fight, I have finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day" (iv. 7-8).

The first note is that of loneliness; at his first trial, no single friend had stood by him (iv. 16), and now gradually all his companions have drifted away one by one, and Luke alone is left (iv. 11).

Added to the weariness of his captivity is the feeling that his own work is done in the world. But the warrior spirit in him is not dead; as he looks out upon the world, he sees that a time of great conflict is coming, and if he can do nothing else, he can hearten his younger friends. As he looks back over his own life, he sees it as a long record of hardships and persecutions (iii. 11), and he makes no doubt that such will be the lot of all who follow in his footsteps (iii. 12). This is an Epistle of battle; there is much in it about willingness to face hardships and even death (ii. 3). The only Christians who will count in the coming conflict are those who are prepared to go all lengths for the cause; such can have no time for trivialities; "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life" (ii. 4); "bid them not engage in arguments which are profitable for nothing" (ii. 14). But through the noise of battle, there is still the note of boundless confidence; "if we have died with Him, we shall live with Him, if we endure, we shall reign with Him" (ii. 11-12). As to his own future, Paul has neither shame nor fear; he is confident that God "is able to keep" (i. 12).

Titus

Titus, like Timothy, was being appointed to Apostolic oversight, not in the Church of Asia Minor, but of Crete. We have no record of the foundation of these Churches; Paul we know to have been in Crete on his journey to Rome (Acts xxvii. 7-8), but there is no record of his having preached on

that occasion, and we cannot be sure whether he had ever visited Titus' flock in person. In any case, like other people in the ancient world, he did not like Cretans (i. 12), and throughout gives them a very bad character. Either through isolation or from the natural character of the people, the Cretan Church had sunk very low; Christianity was a matter of name and profession only (i. 16), and the people fell far below both the doctrinal and the moral requirements of an active and living faith. It is for this reason, perhaps, that the letter is the most theological of the three. In i. 1-3, ii. 1-14, and iii. 3-7, Paul seems to be giving a compendium of Christian doctrine, by keeping within the limits of which Titus would best be able to minister to the needs of his refractory charges; his task was almost to lay again the foundation of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To turn now to the characteristics which all these Epistles share. We cannot fail to be struck by the tremendous emphasis laid on purity of doctrine. "The Spirit expressly says," we are not told where, "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and to doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. iv. 1), and again, "there shall come a time when they shall not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. iv. 3; compare 1 Tim. iv. 1 ff. and Tit. i. 10). Now it is clear that Paul regarded the time in which he was living as the beginning of the manifestation of evil, just as John was able to write "little children, it is the last hour." Various characteristics of the false doctrine are given; it seems that love of money was an

ingredient in it (1 Tim. vi. 5; compare 2 Tim. iii. 3-8); there must have been an element of asceticism (1 Tim. i. 3 ff.; see what is said on this subject in the section on 1 Corinthians); its adherents gave attention to endless genealogies and fables, from which we may infer that Jewish influence had been at work (Tit. i. 14); its consequence was a general disregard for the moral law (2 Tim. iii. 1-6).

But more important than the disease is the remedy which Paul recommends—sound doctrine and a regularly ordered Church. The creative period is over; Paul has laid the foundations of Christian doctrine so surely that the best course for his successors is to teach and exhort (1 Tim. vi. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Tit. ii. 15), along lines which Paul himself had laid down. "The faith" takes the place of the old experimental faith, as is natural in a Church of some standing; the old charismatic ministry, which we found in the Church at Corinth, has disappeared, and what Paul asks of the officers of his Churches is no special endowments, but the simpler, more everyday virtues of order, discipline and uprightness.

It may be asked what profit we can find in reading these letters, in many ways so remote from our necessities. It is impossible that books written for the benefit of the whole Church should always be of service in every part to every individual believer in every age; and in parts of the New Testament we must be content with trying to understand the whole and taking for our own edification such parts as really concern us. In the Pastoral Epistles, we need not really lack for interest. They are made alive

by many personal touches, such as the cloak which Paul had left at Troas and was too poor to do without (2 Tim. iv. 13), the affectionate reference to the house of Onesiphorus (2 Tim. i. 16; iv. 19), the old friends who meet us again, Aquila and Priscilla (2 Tim. iv. 19), Luke (iv. 11), Apollos (Tit. iii. 13); then there are a crowd of sinister figures, Alexander the coppersmith, Hymenæus and Philetas and so on, who flit across the stage and disappear. But beside these smaller matters, there are many great Pauline sayings, by which we should be the poorer if these letters had disappeared: "Our Saviour Christ hath brought life and immortality to light" (2 Tim. i. 10), "the kindness and tender love of God our Saviour" (Tit. iii. 4), and the appeals to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. vi. 12), and to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. ii. 3), which never quite fail to win response from a young man. Finally, we may believe that we see here the beginnings of the Christian hymn. Christian revivals have always been accompanied by great outbursts of singing, and that this was true of the early enthusiasm of the Church, we might guess if there were no evidence to support the guess. It seems almost certain that the short rhythmic sentences of 1 Tim. iii. 16, 2 Tim. ii. 11-13, are taken from Christian Canticles. Perhaps Paul added to all his other services to the Christian Church this, that he first taught it to express itself in song.

VIII

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

"To Hebrews," as it simply appears in the oldest manuscripts is to the critic one of the most perplexing books in the New Testament. We cannot positively assert that it is not by Paul; the learned Greek Church of Alexandria accepted it into the New Testament on the ground that it was by the Apostle (though the great scholar Origen, while admitting that "the thoughts of this Epistle are wonderful, and second to none of the acknowledged Epistles of Paul," suggested that it might be more probably the work of a disciple of his); but the Latin-speaking Church did not believe it to be the work of Paul, and for that reason for a very long time refused it admission to the Canon. There is no doubt that the author, like all the writers of the New Testament, was deeply influenced by the thought of Paul; but the way in which he writes Greek is different, and many of his phrases and ideas, especially the central idea of Christ as our high priest, are unlike anything which we find in the Pauline Epistles. All manner of claimants have been put forward for the honour of authorship of the Epistle; the Latin Father Tertullian in the second century thought that it was the work of Barnabas; a favourite suggestion is that of Luther, that it was by Apollos.

There is nothing really to recommend this, except that Apollos was a Jew of Alexandria, mighty in the Scriptures, and that the author of the Hebrews, while undoubtedly mighty in the Scriptures, does write a little like some of the Alexandrian Jews whose writings we possess. But really the most sensible course is to feel grateful to God that we have the Epistle, and to agree with Origen that "who wrote it, God alone knows."

Whatever the writer's name, he has the distinction of writing the best Greek to be found in the New Testament. The sayings of our Lord are always beautiful in thought, and Paul is very often vigorous and elegant, and Luke, as we have seen, exhibits a flowing and lucid prose style; but there is very little in the Greek New Testament that causes us to stay by its sheer beauty of language, until we come to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here we find an author who is a real literary artist; sometimes the beauty of his language is reflected through even in the English translation: "and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to return; but now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly" (xi. 15-16); even better are the solemn cadences of Jerome's Latin: "Juxta fidem defuncti sunt omnes isti non acceptis repromissionibus sed a longe eas aspicientes et salutantes" (xi. 13), but best of all is the Greek which the author knew so well how to write.

Of the destination of the Epistle we cannot be said to know more than of its author; the Jewish Church in Rome and that in Jerusalem are the favourites

of the many critics who have written on the point. We cannot safely assert more than that the old title is correct, and that the Epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians somewhere. The interesting suggestion has lately been made[1] that they were not so much a Church as a little community of friends in some one of the great cities of the Roman Empire. "They might be Hebrews, but they were not Hebrews in the narrower sense of Hebrew-speaking Jews. They belonged at least to the liberal Judaism of St. Stephen, probably to the philosophic Judaism of Apollos." Apparently they are facing persecution (x. 32-4), though they have not yet had to resist unto blood (xii. 4). The author is writing in a day of great opportunity and temptation; over and over again he reiterates "to-day" and the urgency of to-day (iii. 7, 13, 15; iv. 7); the danger is that they may neglect the great salvation offered in Christ (ii. 3), and drift away (ii. 1, R.V.), that they may withdraw from the ground on which they stand (x. 38, 39). Where should they drift or withdraw to but back into that Judaism from which they had emerged? We cannot reconstruct exactly the circumstances; but we may fancy that the troubles were just beginning which led in A.D. 70 to the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, and of the national and religious life of the Jews. The readers of this Epistle were faced with the alternatives of giving up their nationality and all that the old life had meant to them, and of following Christ out into a new and undiscovered country; or of follow-

[1] By Dr Nairne, in his most interesting and valuable edition in the Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges.

ing the call of the blood, lapsing back into Judaism and siding with their countrymen in the disastrous days which were to come. There was much to draw them ; it was never easy for Jews, considering themselves a kind of aristocracy, to exchange the immemorial history and traditions of Israel for the newness of the new religion, and the solemn splendour of the ritual of Tabernacle and Temple for the simplicity of Christian worship. Yet, says the writer, they must not draw back to perdition, they must step out boldly on the new road, and find in the future an inheritance more glorious than that with which the past was trying to lure them away. The key-word of the Epistle is "better." The aim of the writer is to show that, great and divine as was the old, the new is even more wonderful ; if Christ and Moses must be thrown into contrast, then we must choose Christ. The Epistle is made up of two parts, instruction and appeal, and these two are not separated, but are dexterously interwoven ; at each stage of his argument, the writer turns aside to press home his point by every artifice of passionate appeal. Over and over again, he recurs to the idea of the betterness of the revelation in Christ ; "a more excellent name" (i. 4), better sacrifices (ix. 23), and so on ; perhaps the easiest way to guide our study is to arrange it round those nearly twenty occurrences of the word.

First, then, our Lord is better than the angels, who, according to Jewish tradition, had delivered God's Law to Moses on the Mount (compare Gal. iii. 19) ; they are only ministering spirits, He is Son, King and Creator (i. 1-14). In any case, an

angel would have been useless as a revealer; it is men whom God is purposing to redeem, and through man alone can the redemption come, "for He that maketh holy and they that are made holy are all of one" (ii. 11). So having, in his second chapter, dealt very beautifully and fully with the real manhood of Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels and thereby gained His perfect fitness to help and deliver weak, tempted men, the writer goes on to compare Him with the great men of the past.

The Jewish race looked back with awe and reverence to Moses as the greatest figure in its history; yet Moses was only a servant in God's house, while Jesus has all the authority of a son in his father's house (iii. 1-6). Joshua we need hardly mention, he gave no lasting rest to his people (iv. 8);[1] and we pass on rapidly to Aaron. With the mention for the third time of the word "high priest," we come to the crux of the argument. "Surely," says the Jewish objector, "you have nothing to compare with that in which the Jewish system culminates; the whole priestly order with its unbroken succession from the beginning, with all its conceptions of the representation of man before God, with the propitiation of God by daily sacrifices, with its most solemn moment of reconciliation when once a year the high priest went in, on the Day of Atonement, to the Most Holy Place of God's presence?" (Lev. xvi. 15-19).

Point by point, with remorseless logic, the writer

[1] It is unfortunate that the Authorised Version should have confused ten generations by printing the name here in its Greek form Jesus; of course the reference is not to our Lord.

shows the superiority of the priesthood of Christ to all in the old order. As we read the close-knit argument, we must bear in mind the author's conception of a priest; he is one who stands on the Godward side of men (ii. 17), to represent God to man and man to God. What the priests of the Levitical order strove imperfectly to do, Christ has perfectly fulfilled; there the shadow, here the substance; "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

We are to consider Christ's priesthood in the terms of the promise made by the Messianic Psalm cx.: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek," that mysterious figure, who suddenly appears in the Old Testament record in Gen. xiv., and then equally suddenly disappears, of whose line and parentage we are told nothing (vii. 3). Now when Scripture compares the priesthood of Christ with that of Melchizedek, it indicates that Christ is of a higher order than Aaron; for Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race, himself showed deference to Melchizedek as to a superior (vii. 4-9). This superiority is shown in two ways; first, that the priests of the old covenant change and pass, while Christ is a priest for ever, "after the power of an indissoluble life" (vii. 16). Secondly, Christ's priesthood is guaranteed by an oath, "the Lord sware and will not repent," and therefore it cannot fail or pass away (vii. 21-8).

With this new and better ministry comes also a new and better covenant; Jeremiah had foretold this long ago, and it has been perfectly fulfilled in Christ; the old covenant was a covenant of law; forgiveness of sin was obtained only by sacrifice,

and here, too, the superiority of Christ is clearly seen. The priest of the old Law offered up a bull or a goat, whose blood can never take away sin, but only give the sinner a ritual cleanness; Christ by offering Himself, has offered a sacrifice which can cleanse both life and conscience. Again, in the culmination of the Mosaic rite, the high priest went in once a year to the Holiest Place of an earthly Tabernacle; Christ has entered into the Holiest Place of all, the very presence of God in heaven, there to abide in perpetual glory (ix. 24-8).

The argument is difficult to follow, but mostly because we are unfamiliar with the ideas of sacrifice on which it is based. The essence of it is this, that the life of the sinner is spoiled and marred by sin; life can be repaired only by life, and therefore the life of the victim is set free by its death, that it may make whole again the sinner's life. But the offering of the dumb animal can never really do this; the seat of sin is in the will, and an animal which has only sense and instinct cannot make atonement for the willed and conscious sin of man. The offering can make clear the reality and the horror of sin and the difficulty of forgiveness, but it can do no more than to point forward to a more perfect offering, of which it is but a faint foreshadowing. The offering of Christ was perfect; He gave up to God not only His body but also His will, His whole personality; and therefore His sacrifice can avail to redeem our whole being, body, soul and spirit from sin and death.

The writer can end, therefore, with the triumphant declaration that "by one offering He has

effectively made perfect those who are being made holy . . . and where there is forgiveness of transgressions, there is no more offering for sin" (x. 14-18).

This, in brief outline, is the argument; but the mesh of it is so fine that no summary can do it justice; there is hardly a sentence that can be omitted without serious loss. All through, combined and interwoven with the argument, is its application; at one moment we hear the note of earnest warning (ii. 1-4; iii. 12), at another of exhortation (iv. 14-16), of rebuke (v. 11-14), of encouragement (vi. 9-12). At the last the writer rises to a great climax in three magnificent concluding chapters. The readers are in the same position as all the saints of history; a hard choice is set before them; to choose well will mean to leave old things behind and to step courageously out into an unknown country, facing all its possibilities of hardship and death, staking all on the certainty that God exists and is the helper of those that trust in Him. Even more, the writer represents the saints of old as grouped in eager expectation round his Hebrew readers waiting to see what their choice will be; the old cannot be made perfect without the new, the saints cannot reach their consummation without the Hebrews of the Epistle (xi. 1-40). And how much greater help have these than their predecessors; those of old had only the terror and the mystery of God's presence; these have the fellowship of all the angels and the saints of God, and above all the companionship and example of the Mediator of the New Covenant and the power of the redemption in His blood (xii. 1-24). The conflict will not be easy; it will

mean bearing the reproach of Jesus,[1] coming out of the camp of Israel to join Him in His humiliation; but the reward is the entry into an abiding city, the New Jerusalem (xiii. 8-16).

Of the fate of these unknown Jewish Christians, we can read no more; we cannot tell whether they went boldly forward into the larger and freer air of God's great purpose, or whether they fell back into the narrower ways of Judaism; we can hardly believe this last; with such an Epistle to help them, how could they fall back? But we can read the message of the letter to the individual and to the Church of every age. The purpose of God is always moving forward; at every stage there are old things which must be discarded as past their use; always there is a new country ahead to conquer, whose conquest demands new devotion and sacrifice. Those who go forward find ever new and better fellowship with God, new truth about the one High Priest, who ever leads those who come to God by Him into the eternal city, "the city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God" (xi. 10).

[1] The use of the names and titles of Christ in this Epistle is very striking; wherever the name Jesus stands alone, it refers to the humanity of our Lord, which was the condition of His glory.

IX

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES

Of the letters included in the New Testament, the greater part is by Paul; but after those written by him or associated with him, there is a group which is generally known as the Catholic Epistles; this has nothing to do with Catholicism or even catholicity as generally understood; it merely means that, like some of Paul's letters, these letters were addressed not to a single Church, but to Christians scattered over a wide area. The Authorised Version translates and calls them "The Epistles General." These letters are by various hands, and, speaking generally, are later than the other books of the New Testament: it is on them that we partly depend for our knowledge of the state of affairs in the Church after the death of Paul.

1. *The Epistle of James*

At the head of them stands that very remarkable document the Epistle of James; it is the hardest book in the New Testament to assign to date or place. It has often been maintained that James was the brother of the Lord, who was for many years head of the Jerusalem Church. This is quite probable; the Jewish cast of the Epistle and its practical character would fit well with what we know

of that James from the Acts and from the later writers who have spoken of him. But James or Jacob was a common name among the Jews, and we cannot regard the identification as certain. The letter was addressed to Jews outside Palestine (i. 1). The writer does not mention that they are Christian Jews, but leaves it to be inferred, and he implies that the letter is to be read over all the Roman Empire, for so wide at least was "the Dispersion"; if the author was the head of the Jerusalem Church, his letter would have a very good chance of being so read. Because the letter is simple in its teaching, some have supposed it to be the earliest of the New Testament writings, written before Paul had developed his theology and when his teaching was only just beginning to make a stir in the world. Others think that it is nearer in character to the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, who came after the days of the great theologies and were more interested in practical affairs than in deep matters of doctrine. If this contention were correct, James would be the latest book in the New Testament.

But to discuss such matters is less important than to discover what is in the book itself. First, we cannot but notice its very Jewish character. The name of Christ is only mentioned twice, in i. 1, and in ii. 1; there are other possible references, as in v. 6, "Ye have slain the just," and v. 8, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." But when the writer wants an example of patience in affliction, his mind turns back not to the sufferings of Christ, but to the patience of Job[1] and the prophets

[1] Which he probably regarded as typical of the patience of Christ.

(v. 10) ; he thinks constantly in terms of the law (ii. 8-12 ; iv. 11-12), and he breaks out into vigorous denunciations of the rich, which have the very ring of an Old Testament prophet, Isaiah or Amos, at the court of a wicked king of Israel or Judah (see especially v. 1-6).

Then those who can read Greek will notice that his Greek is good, even literary, and that he has a vocabulary of rather rare poetical words on which to draw. He is fond of short picturesque illustrations from daily life, almost parables in miniature ; the billow of the sea (i. 6), the man looking in the mirror and immediately forgetting what he was like (i. 23-4), the steersman guiding the great ship with the tiny rudder (iii. 4). He likes to end each section with a pithy proverbial phrase. " Mercy rejoiceth over judgment " (ii. 13). " Who art thou that judgest thy neighbour ? " (iv. 12). " Behold the judge standeth at the door " (v. 9). We are reminded of the Proverbs of the Old Testament.

The centre and heart of the book is the discussion of faith in Chapter ii. 14-26 ; faith to Paul had meant an act of the whole man, a surrender of mind and heart and will to God ; but his doctrine that man is made righteous by faith alone, was very easy to misinterpret ; and it had been interpreted then, as often since by foolish men, as meaning that if a man believed with his lips and in his mind in Christ, it did not matter what he did. The connection between religion and morality is always rather a tenuous thread. James by his sturdy directness brings the matter straight back to the practical issue, where a direct test is possible. Faith is something

intangible, which many people profess and but few possess ; conduct is perfectly concrete and tangible ; we can all see what a man does ; and if what he does is inconsistent with the standards of Christ, we may quite safely conclude that there is something wrong also with what he believes. The very instance of Abraham, which was used by Paul to prove his point, is used by James with equal force and appropriateness to prove his point. He has already led up to this theme in i. 22-7 ; the nature of true religion consists not in hearing but in doing ; not in mere observances of piety, but in giving proper effect to that piety in practical and beneficent shouldering of everyday responsibilities. Abraham certainly believed God, but the proof of that faith was in the works of which it was the cause ; it made Abraham willing even to offer up his son Isaac on the altar. It is often said by perverse people that James and Paul contradict one another ; the only answer to the contention is to read the relevant passages together with their contexts. There are verbal contradictions ; but surely the two writers are only emphasising complementary sides of a great and complex theme. Paul does not leave James' side without mention and even emphasis. Both sides are quite essential to the dignity of the Christian faith.

With this background of practical responsibility, James proceeds to apply his sanctified common sense, that great and much under-estimated quality, to various of the practical difficulties of life—very much the same difficulties then as now. What is to be the relation between the rich and poor in the Christian congregation ? Is it right to show respect

to rich men simply because they are rich, even if their lives and conduct have deserved anything but respect ? (ii. 1-9). James is not at all fond of the rich ; he has some very hard words to say about those who pay inadequate wages and extort sweated labour. Then there is the perpetual trouble of quarrelling, jealousy and backbiting in the Christian congregation. He keeps on reverting to the use of the tongue and the harm it may do ; a man should be slow to speech, slow to wrath (i. 19) ; the man who pretends to be religious and cannot bridle his own tongue deceives his own heart (i. 26). The whole of the third chapter is taken up with the evils of cursing and boastfulness ; the writer goes so far as to say that the man who does not fail in the matter of the tongue is a perfect man. He comes back quite suddenly to the subject in v. 12, with strong words about the misuse of an oath, " above all things, my brethren, swear not at all." Then he has some very wise words about unanswered prayer and the spirit in which prayer should be offered (i. 6-8 ; iv. 2-6). In fact, in every subject on which he touches, he brings penetrating light to bear on character and motive and duty.

Luther called this Epistle an Epistle of straw, and objected to its inclusion in the New Testament, because it seemed to him to contradict his favourite doctrine of justification by faith. But James has a very important part to play in preserving the balance of the New Testament. It is very hard always to remember the application of things. John Newton, who in latter life became a very holy man and wrote the hymn, " How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,"

when he was converted was the captain of a slave-ship; after his conversion, he used to meet for prayer with some of his officers on the deck of his ship, and never noticed the incongruity of the proceeding with the stifling mass of misery below his feet. It is true that James has neither the passion of Paul nor the profundity of the writer to the Hebrews; but there will always be people to whom Christianity appeals most neither as a system of thought nor as an inward experience, but as a way, a guide amid all the perplexing duties of life. For their sake, perhaps, this book was written and to them it will always be one of the most valued and inspiring parts of the whole New Testament.

2. *The first Epistle of Peter*

Paul's letters were addressed to a single Church or to an individual; the first Epistle of Peter is what we should call an Encyclical; it is written to the elect pilgrims or sojourners of "the Dispersion" in five provinces of the Roman Empire, that is to say probably to the little companies of Jewish believers living in the midst of Gentile Churches. That it was by a Jewish leader we might easily guess from the fact that of its seventy-five verses, thirty-five contain quotations from the Old Testament, some of them of considerable length. But that it was by the Apostle Peter no one would have suggested if the first verse had been lost. Even the phrase "Mark my son" (v. 13) might have been written by Paul as well as by Peter, and Silvanus (v. 12) was an old

friend of Paul, and had co-operated with him in the writing of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. (Did he perhaps help out, in this Epistle, Peter's probably not very adequate knowledge of Greek ?) The most remarkable thing about the letter is its close similarity even in details with the language, thought and teaching of Paul. To become immediately conscious of this, it is necessary only to read a chapter of the Epistle in a reference Bible, looking up all the Pauline references. For instance, with " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ " (i. 3), compare Ephesians i. 3 ; with " not being conformed to the former lusts " (i. 14), compare Rom. xii. 2, " be not conformed to the world," where the same very unusual Greek word is used ; with " I have written in few words " (v. 12), compare Eph. iii. 3. But apart from details of phrasing, the whole construction of the letter, with its blend of doctrine and exhortation, reminds us forcibly of the Pauline model. Perhaps the easiest way to master this Epistle, of which it is singularly hard to remember the argument, is carefully to compare it, section by section, with the various passages in Paul which deal with the same themes.

But it would be wholly untrue to say, because this letter in some ways agrees with the teaching of Paul, that it is Pauline in the sense that it might have been written by him ; the writer has a character of his own which distinguishes him from all the other New Testament writers. It is very difficult to analyse this special and peculiar character ; we can point to certain individualities of the writer's good and copious Greek, as that he is very fond of negative

adjectives (i. 4, incorruptible, undefiled, unfading; ii. 10, guileless, etc.),[1] but details of this kind explain little. The character of the Epistle is given partly by the gentleness and tenderness of the writer (ii. 11; iv. 12, etc.), and partly by the main subject of which he has to treat.

That subject is persecution. Soon after the middle of the first century, the subject became tragically prominent; to the petty opposition of Jews and local mobs was now added the iron hand of imperial Rome. How are the Christians to behave when persecution overtakes them? Peter gives them three answers.

I. The first is general; it prescribes an attitude of life. This is above all the Epistle of hope; the note is sounded in i. 3, "hath begotten us again unto a living hope," and it runs through the whole letter to v. 6, "that he may exalt you in due time," and v. 10, "God shall stablish, strengthen, settle you." This hope is in a salvation ready to be revealed at the last day (i. 5), not in that earthly domination which the Jews expected as the merciful outcome of their sorrows, but in the manifestation of the Son of God from heaven (i. 13).

II. The second answer is not yet quite direct; persecution is to be met by holiness of life. The Church was being forcibly reminded of the insecurity of its tenure in earthly things; "accept the situation," says Peter; "this is after all only a time of

[1] This is much more noticeable in Greek: *ἄφθαρος, ἀμίαντος, ἀμαράντος, ἄδολος*, etc.

sojourning " (i. 17), " we are strangers and pilgrims " (ii. 11), bound by the terms of our redemption not to earth and to corruptible things, but to heaven and to God in whom are our faith and hope (i. 18). In this house of our pilgrimage, it is our natural lot to be persecuted as Christ was. " Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow in His steps " (ii. 21). We are not to regard our fiery trials as a strange thing ; it is only our share in the sufferings of Christ (iv. 12-13). Persecution brings bitterness only if it is deserved ; therefore, the Christian must be so blameless as to make ridiculous by the blamelessness of his life the excuses which are given for the persecution (iii. 16). To suffer as a wrongdoer is not persecution but justice (ii. 20; iv. 15), to suffer unjustly for righteousness' sake (iii. 14), or as a Christian (iv. 16), is a source of joy rather than of sorrow.

III. Persecution at once raised the question of resistance or non-resistance. By giving the answer " honour the king " (ii. 17), and " be subject to all human authority for the Lord's sake " (ii. 13), Peter emphatically declares in favour of non-resistance ; and, since the king was probably the abominable Nero, he condemns in advance all the violent revolutions of history. It is certainly permitted to reason with the adversary (iii. 15), but there is no hint that it is ever legitimate to oppose evil with evil.

Most of the readers of this Epistle even in the present day know something, or will soon know something, of standing fast for Christ in the face of

opposition; in times of trial, 1 Peter is one of the most cheering and refreshing books in the whole New Testament; and not least because of the note of triumphant gladness which runs all through it. No one can long remain down-hearted who really agrees with the great saying, "in whom believing, though now ye see Him not, ye exult with joy unspeakable and full of glory receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

3. *The second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*

We turn now to two books which for a very long time hung on the fringe of the New Testament; 2 Peter and Jude were only finally received as part of it after long discussion and disagreement in the Church. In the case of 2 Peter, the root of the trouble was the question of authorship. 2 Peter and Jude are so much alike in contents that it is almost impossible to suppose them to have been written without borrowing in one direction or the other (compare 2 Peter ii. 4-17, with Jude 6-13; note the correspondence of the illustrations, the fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Balaam; and the exact reappearance of the phrase, "for whom the blackness of darkness has been reserved" in 2 Peter ii. 17 and Jude 13). It is impossible to show definitely which is the earlier, but the probability inclines in favour of Jude, the shorter letter. Now it was believed to be improbable that the Apostle Peter should have used the work of another man. Further, both Epistles seem to reflect conditions

which did not obtain in the Church till after the Neronian persecution, in which tradition asserts that the Apostle Peter met his death. There is a real difference between the smooth ordered sentences of 1 Peter, and the rather loosely constructed sentences and most unusual vocabulary of the second Epistle; it is almost impossible to believe that the Greek text of both has come from the same hand. The allusion in iii. 16, to the letters of Paul with "the other scriptures" sounds strange from the lips of a contemporary and fellow-Apostle. Finally, it has been asserted by some that the claims to personal knowledge of Christ made by the writer of 2 Peter give the impression not so much of reminiscences of a friend of Christ as of assertions made by one claiming an Apostolic authority which he did not possess. In the case of Jude, the difficulty of authorship is secondary to the consideration that he quotes from the Apocryphal book of Enoch; and the authorities of the Early Church were much perplexed to know whether it was better to include Enoch in the Old Testament or to exclude Jude from the New.

On the conservative side, it may be said that when a writer emphatically claims to be one person, we require overwhelming evidence before we can prove him to be someone else; especially as, if the proof is forthcoming, he has to stand his trial not merely for passing under an alias, but also for giving authority to a religious forgery by passing it off under a false name, and that not very long after the death of the person whose name was assumed. We know far too little of what Peter might or might

not have written, and in what circumstances, to assert that he could not have written this letter. The German scholar Zahn accepts this letter as really Peter's, even though he feels compelled in consequence [1] to sacrifice the authenticity of 1 Peter. Even if the two Greek texts are by different hands, we may think of two letters dictated in Aramaic and rendered into Greek by different translators.

The two letters are mostly taken up with a vigorous attack on false teaching within the Church. We do not win our way to heaven by being good, but it is impossible to follow Christ without becoming good. No greater disaster can befall the Church than that the idea of being religious should be separated from the idea of being good; and this is what had happened in the Church to which Peter and Jude were writing. "Promising freedom" (2 Peter ii. 19), false teachers were bidding men disregard the ordinary precepts of the moral law; it was a complete reversal of the common and untrue saying, "What does it matter what a man believes so long as what he does is right?" into "What does it matter what a man does so long as his faith is right?"

The two writers partly denounce the heretics, in order to make clear the dangerous character of their teaching, partly instruct the Christians how to meet them. For the most part they are simply to be avoided, for evil is contagious, and is all the more dangerous when it comes in the guise of religion. Jude, however, holds out a hope that some of them may be saved if the evil has not gone too

[1] On the ground of the great difference in style between the two Epistles.

far (Jude 22-3). Both are agreed that far the best answer to false teaching is in loyalty to the truth as already known (2 Peter i. 12-21 ; Jude 3, " the faith once delivered to the saints "), and in uprightness of life (Jude 20-21 ; 2 Peter i. 5-7). Peter gives us a summary of the growth of the Christian in the life of faith which might be compared to a simplified version of what Paul has taught us in 1 Cor. xiii.

One other problem is dealt with by Peter. The earliest disciples had lived in expectation of the immediate return of Christ from heaven ; as the days lengthened into years, and His Coming seemed no nearer, men had become disillusioned and asked, then as now, " where is the promise of His coming ? " (2 Peter iii. 4) ; and they were settling down to the comfortable assurance, then as now, that nothing ever changes and that the world will go on for ever as it is. This attitude Peter rebukes ; the world had a beginning and must have an end (iii. 10), which will come in God's good time (iii. 8, 9). Whether it comes in our time or not, we are to be obeying the command of our Lord to watch (iii. 12 ; compare Mark xiii. 32-7), with all the uprightness and diligence which such an attitude implies.

These two Epistles are not as we speak among the most important in the New Testament. But if they serve to remind us of our duty to love the truth above all things and to fight against every form of untruth or half-truth, and to teach us that God does not always work by agelong processes, but sometimes by a sudden intervention for which we must at all times be ready, we shall see that the Spirit of God

guided the Church rightly when they were preserved by being included among the sacred books.

4. *The Johannine Epistles*

Three letters have come down to us under the name of John. There is no indication in them as to their authorship ; the first is quite anonymous ; in the other two, the writer speaks of himself simply as " the presbyter " (2 John 1 ; 3 John 1). But the resemblances to the fourth Gospel are so many in style and language and thought that we are forced to the conclusion that all three Epistles come from that Ephesian Church for which the fourth Gospel was written. We cannot positively assert that all three are by the same hand, but this must be held to be at least highly probable, and from the tone of authority which the writer of the first Epistle adopts towards even " the fathers " (ii. 13-14), we may suppose him to be himself that great teacher of the Ephesian Church, who, we have seen reason to believe, was no other than the Apostle John himself.

The first Epistle revolves round certain pairs of opposites. There is no formal argument ; the writer is setting down his meditations ; one thought leads on to another, and certain great ideas are constantly recurring. These centre in the contrast between light and darkness, life and death, sin and righteousness, truth and falsehood, love and hate. In ordinary life, these tend to shade off into one another, like the scarcely distinguishable lights and

shadows of dawn; in the crisis of the Christian conflict, they must be thrown into violent contrast like the blacks and whites of an Eastern noonday.

The letter is shortly summed up in the last few verses (v. 18-21), and especially in the closing words: "This is the real God and life eternal. Little children, keep yourselves from shadows" (Greek εἰδωλα = ghosts, unrealities). The purpose of the writer is to lead his readers from the uncertainties of false and inadequate beliefs to certainty and reality, from twilight to full light; or to confirm them in the belief that the light in which they walk is the true light of God. Hence the emphasis on knowledge; every possible Greek word is used to express certainty in its different aspects. "You know for a fact that no murderer has eternal life" (iii. 15). "Herein we have learnt by experience to recognise love" (iii. 16). "Hereby we shall know from experience that we are of the truth" (iii. 19). "Hereby we come to understand that we abide in Him" (iv. 13). The basis of this certainty is in large measure a matter of personal experience, and this experience the writer describes ordinarily by the word "abiding," which he uses twenty times in five short chapters. Sometimes it is said that God abides in us, at other times that we abide in God: but what is meant in each case is the same. The greater part of the Epistle is taken up with requirements for entering on and maintaining this experience of fellowship with God.

There are really only two ways of studying this Epistle. One is to take individual verses and ponder over them till their full meaning becomes clear:

the other is to read the whole Epistle over and over again and absorb its spirit. It is not possible to indicate a consecutive line of thought, but the following suggestions may form a rough guide to the way in which the Epistle moves. God may be thought of under various aspects—light, life, spirit, and so on; and if fellowship with Him is to continue, these attributes of God must be reproduced in the believer.

From i. 5 to ii. 11, the dominant thought is that of light. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." Sin is of the nature of darkness; the doing of sin, still more the attempt to hide it when it has been done, makes fellowship with God impossible. Then the thought of truth comes to the fore. Many antichrists are gone out into the world; some deny that Jesus is the Christ. The only road to the desired oneness with God is that of a true faith; "he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also." Then in iii. 1, the thought passes on to that of sonship; it is characteristic of the son to be like the father; therefore, sin in a man reveals his kinship not with God but with the author of sin. But the greatest and central section is that on love. "God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God in him." The love of God, indeed the very nature of love itself, was first clearly revealed in Christ and His death. So Christian love must manifest itself in ungrudging and sacrificial service. The Epistle ends on the note of life; God is the unchanging source of all life, and fellowship with Him has as its corollary eternal life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (v. 12).

The two other letters are brief notes. The first reads as if it were addressed to a Church, the second is to a private person, and is taken up with private affairs. From them we learn more of the nature of the false teachers ; they are those who deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (2 John 7). With an urgent exhortation to continue without wavering in the true faith, the writer couples his old command, " Love one another " (2 John 5), and urges his friend not to let this love be barren ; " He that doeth good is of God, he that doeth evil hath not seen God " (3 John 11).

X

THE REVELATION

The book which calls itself the "Manifestation of Jesus Christ," and which we usually call the Revelation of St John the Divine,[1] is the most difficult book in the New Testament, but it cannot be neglected without loss; its promise of a special blessing to its readers will not be questioned by those who know and love it; and though much of it we may not understand, we can all appreciate the beauty of its language and thought and teaching about our Lord. As a book, it is unique in literature; it is the one specimen of Christian prophecy which has been included in the New Testament; it is written in a style all its own, as by a man who thinks in Hebrew and writes down his thoughts in Greek, without much regard for the elementary rules of grammar and syntax. The result from the linguistic point of view is curious, but the book has a charm and dignity all its own.

The first question we ask is whether, as its ecclesiastical title implies, it was really written by the Apostle John. The question of authorship is connected with that of date. The one guide which we have as to the latter is the fact that the book was

[1] Scholars always call it the Apocalypse; this is only the Greek for "revelation."

written in a time of great distress for the Church; the attitude of the Roman power has changed; in the Acts we saw it friendly on the whole to the Church, now the bitter waves of persecution have arisen, and Empire and Church are at death-grips. Twice in the first century this happened; once in A.D. 64 in the reign of Nero, when Christians clad in coats of pitch formed the illuminations for Nero's gardens: and again in A.D. 93, under the brutal and licentious Domitian. The book might belong to either reign; one theory, which depends on a particular interpretation, is that it was written at the earlier date, and re-edited not altogether to its advantage in 93 or 94. If it was written in 93, it is very hard to believe that the neat expressive sentences of the fourth Gospel and the most unusual Greek of this book came from the same hand at much the same time. If the Revelation was written earlier, the difficulty is much less, and the late Prof. Gwatkin was able to write (though his opinion would not be endorsed by the majority of scholars): "The evidence for St John's authorship seems strong for the Apocalypse, and still stronger for the fourth Gospel. . . . The Apocalypse is a harder question. But we may safely say that its difference from the Gospel is very much what we should expect if it was written soon after St John's arrival in Asia, while the Gospel dates from quieter times, perhaps twenty years later, when his thoughts were ripened and his Greek improved." We may remember also that the difficulty is greatly lessened if the connection of the fourth Gospel with the Apostle was not that of authorship but that suggested as possible

on page 91. In any case, it is clear from the words in i. 2, that the writer intends his readers to understand that he is the Apostle John (compare i. 4; xxii. 8).

The interpretations of the book are legion, and none are wholly satisfactory; as is well known, the mysterious number 666 (xiii. 18) has been explained as referring to Nero, Louis XIV., Napoleon and every great and infamous man in history. It may be laid down as a principle that the subject of the book is the conflict of good and evil in the world; but this may be applied:

1. Historically; to that time and the persecution of the Church by the Roman Empire.

2. Prophetically; to the events of later history, and especially to the events of the Last Judgment.

3. Spiritually; to the conflict between God and the devil which is constantly going on.

It is clear that these interpretations need not be mutually exclusive.

With this in mind, our first business is to discover what is really in the book; it may be conveniently divided into three parts:

i.-iii. Consolation.
iv.-xx. Conflict.
xxi.-xxii. Consummation.

I. After a brief preface, the Revelation begins with a splendid vision (i. 9-18) of the glory of the

risen Lord, and John is commissioned to send a message to the seven Churches in Asia; we are given a picture of a Church which has partly lost its first love (ii. 4), and is neither hot nor cold (iii. 15), torn by disloyalties and heresies (ii. 6, 14, 15), grievously tempted, dwelling where Satan's seat is (ii. 13), persecuted (ii. 9, 10); and yet not altogether without life and service (ii. 19; iii. 12). To this Church then is sent a warning (ii. 5, etc.) that repentance is needed if the Churches are not to be swept away, and at the same time they are accorded encouragement and hope in the faithfulness of the Lord.

II. Then begins the Vision proper. John is caught up into heaven, and sees first a vision of things as they really are; he sees God surrounded by:

1. Four "living-ones,"[1] the representatives of redeemed nature.

2. Four-and-twenty elders, the representatives of redeemed humanity.

3. The myriads of angels who need no redemption.

The stage being ready, Christ now comes in with a most effective contrast; we expect a lion and behold a slain Lamb (v. 5, 6); He appears as the One who alone can open the book that is in God's hand, that is, who alone can fulfil God's purposes. After songs of praise from the host of heaven, we

[1] The translation "beasts" in the Authorised Version is most unfortunate; and "creatures" in the Revised is not very much better.

proceed with an orderly sequence of sevens; there are seven seals, seven trumpets and seven bowls; after the sixth of each, there is a parenthesis, and a break between each series. It appears as though each series ended at the same point, and dealt with the same period, though not beginning at the same point; but the language is deeply symbolic and hard to understand.

When the sixth seal is opened (vi. 12-17), we are conscious of an impending climax of judgment; then, in vii., there is a pause while the faithful, both Jew and Gentile, are removed from the "great tribulation." After that, the seventh seal is opened and we have the greatest *non sequitur* in literature; we expect the thunder of doomsday, and are given "silence in heaven for the space of half an hour." The commentator Victorinus sublimely writes, *initium quietis aeternae*—the beginning of eternal rest.

Again a brief pause, and then the judgments of the seven trumpets begin; the last three are specially distinguished as "woes" (viii. 13). With the fifth, Abaddon, the angel of the bottomless pit, is let loose with a plague, as it were, of locusts; with the sixth, the four angels of the Euphrates are sent forth with an army as of horses; it is made clear that the purpose of these plagues is to turn men to repentance. Before the seventh trumpet, there is a longer parenthesis; first, the imminence of the end is stated; "there shall be no more time" (x. 6-7): then follow the episodes of the eating of the book and the measuring of the sanctuary (for the explanation of which we must look to the

book of the prophet Ezekiel), and of the two witnesses (with its allusion to the book of the prophet Zechariah). At last the seventh trumpet sounds—and nothing happens; we hear words of triumph and thanksgiving and that is all.

The seven bowls do not appear till Chapter xv.; in the meantime we are given a nearer view of the powers of evil; first, we see the devil attacking a mysterious woman, and then cast out of heaven by Michael and his angels. Being cast down to the earth, he sets to work two evil forces called the two beasts, to whom is subsequently added a third, the false prophet; their mission is to destroy those who are faithful to God, and to lead the rest of mankind astray. Chapter xiv. is taken up with episodes of warning and encouragement; and at last, the harvest of the world is declared ready for reaping, the stage is cleared, and, to the joy of the redeemed, the angels having the seven last plagues come forth. Matters move very quickly now; after the sixth angel has poured out his bowl, there is a very short pause, in which the nations are gathered to the great conflict at Armageddon. Then the seventh angel pours out his bowl, and there is a voice which says, "It is done." But we are not now to be left in doubt as to what happens at the last; the name of Babylon has once been mentioned already (xiv. 8) and now we are told that God has remembered Babylon, "the great harlot." This figure of speech is used in the Old Testament to describe faithlessness to God, and it is probable that, in the two tremendous chapters of judgment which follow, what we are seeing is the wrath of God poured out on the

accumulated wickedness of man on earth. This is the first act of judgment. But that is not all; when man's wickedness has been judged, a hymn of praise ushers in the second act; Christ as King of Kings goes forth to war, and the spiritual powers of evil are cast out (xix. 19-xx. 3). The third act of judgment concerns the souls of men: there is an interval during which the faithful reign with Christ; the powers of evil are let loose for a little space; and then the end—the judgment of the great white throne.

III. At last the conflict is over; and we are shown the vision of the perfection of God's purpose: three features may be noticed about the new heaven and the new earth of God's creation:

1. The perfection of beauty.

2. The perfection of goodness, every evil thing being cast out.

3. The perfection of communion and service; God and the Lamb are there, and His servants shall serve Him.

So much for the contents of the book. In studying it in detail, two facts have to be very carefully borne in mind.

1. That the book is written largely in symbolic language; sometimes the key to the symbol is lost and we must be content to say that we do not understand; and often, we can only make a guess at the meaning.

2. That the Revelation is steeped in the Old Testament; in its short compass, there are more than three hundred quotations and allusions; these are drawn from every part of the Old Testament and presuppose a very considerable knowledge in the reader; perhaps the books of Ezekiel and Daniel make the most important contribution. The Old Testament will often give the meaning of a symbol; the phrase the "Lamb of God" is perfectly familiar to us, but it gains enormously in significance if read in connection with all the Old Testament teaching on sacrifice and propitiation.

We may single out, perhaps, three lines, along which the Revelation may most profitably be studied.

1. *The glory of the Risen Lord.* The keynote to this is struck in the opening, but it runs as an undercurrent through all the seven songs with which the book is adorned, and culminates in the description in Chapter xix., of Him who has a name written which no man knows, and another name, which is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The titles given to our Lord are a fascinating study; some of them are old; others, such as "the bright and morning Star," are new and very beautiful.

2. *The safety of those who fear God.* The book, as we saw, was written under the shadow of persecution; it is repeatedly asserted that

those who live and those who die are alike in the hand of God. The whole of the wonderful Chapter vii. is taken up with this theme; it is reiterated in xiv. 1-4; beautifully expressed in xiv. 13, "Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord," and perfected in the new heaven (xxii. 3), where the servants are left face to face with their Master.

3. *The certainty of God's victory.* When the forces of evil are most strongly massed against God, there is yet sounding all the time the deep note of judgment. In the first hymn, the Lord is praised as Almighty (iv. 8); in xi. 15, a voice in heaven proclaims that the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and the phrase is taken up by the elders, "Thou hast taken Thy great power and reigned." After the judgment of Babylon, the heavenly powers repeat the refrain (xix. 6), "The Lord God omnipotent hath taken the kingdom": and at the last, as we have seen, all evil is done away, and God is all in all.

The vision closes quietly; the guarantee is given by the Lord of the Church: "I, Jesus, have sent My messenger to bear you this witness concerning the Churches. I am the root and offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say Come; and let him that heareth say Come, and let him that is athirst come; he that

will, let him take of the water of life freely." With a repetition of blessing on the reader, and a final warning of urgency, "Lo, I come suddenly," to which the Apostle assents, the curtain falls; but we are left with the consciousness that the Jesus of this book is the same Jesus whom we have known elsewhere, and that the promises are for us and for all "who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity."

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE EDINBURGH PRESS, 9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET, EDINBURGH

NOTABLE BOOKS FROM OUR LIST

The Making and Meaning of the Bible

By GEORGE BARCLAY, M.A. Second Edition. Crown 8vo. 4s. net.; paper, 2s. 6d. net.

"A very fair and very practical attempt is made to convey to the enquiring mind that has not the leisure or means for wide and deep study the general results of the latest and best criticism of the Biblical books."—*The Guardian.*

The Person of Jesus Christ

By Professor H. R. MACKINTOSH, D.D. Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo. 2s. net.

A study of the claims made by the historic Jesus, and of their vindication in human experience, including a discussion of His divinity. An attempt to answer the question, "Who was Jesus Christ?"

The Meaning of the Old Testament according to Modern Scholarship

By HUGH MARTIN, M.A. Third Edition. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.

"It communicates the leading results of criticism and research in a simple, attractive and convincing form."—*Holborn Review.*

"The book is a triumph of scholarship made popular."—*Expository Times.*

Prayer and Personality

By MALCOLM SPENCER, M.A., Author of "Work, Play, and the Gospel," etc. 4s. net; paper, 2s. 6d. net.

"A man's prayer is a part of the constant inner activity of his personality by which his outward bearing is determined, and out of which his outward conduct springs. I want to examine the ways in which this interior life of our spirits may be so influenced, so directed, and perhaps even so regulated, that God has His right place in the whole of our life and personality."—*Extract.*

Paul of Tarsus

By Dr T. R. GLOVER, Author of "The Jesus of History," etc.

"I feel sure that in this work of genius, for it is nothing less, he has given us the real Paul, and the real Paul is very unlike the figure traditionally presented for our acceptance both by Catholic and Protestant Theologians."—*Church of England Newspaper.*

More Psychology and the Christian Life

By T. W. PYM, D.S.O., M.A. A Sequel to "Psychology and the Christian Life" (now in its seventh edition, completing 21,000 copies). 4s. net; paper, 2s. 6d. net.

"Mr Pym has really given us one of the most wholesome of recent works on Christian psychology. It is neither technical nor involved. It is characterised throughout by a common sense and faith that are delightful."—*Record.*

32 RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W.C. 1